

ECLECTIC SCHOOL READINGS

STORIES
OF
HUMBLE FRIENDS



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HUMBLE FRIENDS

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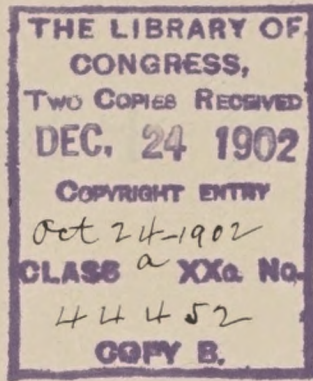
KATHARINE PYLE

WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR



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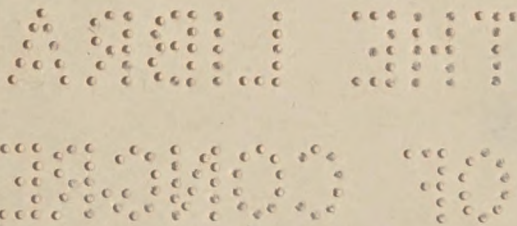
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KATHARINE PYLE

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Stories of Humble Friends
W. P. I



*“ He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”*

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STORIES OF HUMBLE FRIENDS

THE STORY OF A CATERPILLAR

A CATERPILLAR had crawled up on a twig. It looked the twig all over, then fastened itself tightly to it by its hind legs and began twisting itself and moving its head up and down with a weaving motion. Every time the caterpillar's head moved it left behind it something that looked like a glistening thread of silk.

An ant that was crawling along the branch stopped and stared with wonder. "What in the world are you doing?" it asked.

The caterpillar paused to rest for a moment. It was hard work bending and doubling itself in that way. "I'm making a house," it said.

"Making a house!" cried the ant.

A bee that had lighted close by began to buzz with laughter. "Will you tell me, if you please, what sort of a house that is?" he cried.

“The only sort of house I know how to make,” the caterpillar answered humbly.

“I never heard of anything so absurd. Why don’t you hunt about and find a hollow tree, or a good hive, and live in that? Then you would be safe.”

“Or you might find a hole under a stone,” added the ant. “That’s a very good place.”

The caterpillar shook its head. “This is the only sort of house I know how to make,” it repeated. Then it set to work again.

As for the bee and the ant they went their ways. “A poor sort of a house indeed,” each one thought to itself.

But the caterpillar went on working.

Up and down, up and down its head moved, weaving and weaving. Now the silk was like a thin, silvery veil about it. Through the veil you could still faintly see the caterpillar moving.

At last the veil grew so thick that you could not see the caterpillar at all. You could only guess that it might still be at work inside.

After a while the bee came by that way again.

It stopped and looked the little house all over. Then it flew down to the ant-hill. “Miss Ant, Miss

Ant, come out here," it buzzed. " I've such a joke to tell you."

The little ant stuck its head up from the hill.

" Such a joke ! That caterpillar we were watching has finished its house, and has forgotten to leave any door," and the bee buzzed very hard.

" That is too bad," said the ant ; " I'm afraid it will starve to death."

But the caterpillar did not die. It was not even hungry. It was fast asleep in its little cocoon house. While it slept the sun shone or the rain beat, but the little house let in neither sun nor rain. It was snug and dark.

If anyone had opened the cocoon now he would have found a wonderful thing. Inside the hard, gray outside shell was a lining as soft as silk, and still inside of this was something—what was it? Not a caterpillar ; not a moth either, though if one looked carefully one could see what looked like tiny wings folded closely down each side of folded legs, and the shape of feathery antennæ such as moths



Cocoon cut open

have, but these too folded closely down. All were sealed together in what looked like a brown, soft skin. This thing was what we call a pupa.

Days and nights passed and at last what had once been the caterpillar began to stir and wake.

“How strange I feel! How strange I feel,” said the thing to itself. “I must have light and air.”

One end of the cocoon was very soft and loose. It was through this end that what had once been the caterpillar pushed its way out into the air.

Oh, how weak and ill it felt! Fastened to it on each side were two crumpled wet things which it began to move feebly up and down. As it moved them it felt its strength returning and the crumpled things began to spread and dry. Broader and broader they spread until they were strong velvety wings, two on each side. They were of the most beautiful soft brown color with a pinkish border along the edges. In the middle of each of the lower wings was a glistening spot like the “eye” spot on a peacock’s feather

This thing was no caterpillar; it was a beautiful winged moth.

Presently it walked from the twig down upon the gray cocoon within which it had lain so long. Then

it spread its wings and floated softly off through the air and down to the earth. It did not fly far, for it had not its full strength as yet.

When it alighted, where should it be but on the ant-hill. The little ant was very busy there, tugging at twigs and leaves, and hunting for food. It stopped its work to stare with awe at the wonderful stranger. "You beautiful thing," it said, "where did you come from?"



Moth on Cocoon

"Don't you remember the caterpillar that made itself a house on the twig above?"

"Oh yes, poor thing, it must have died long ago," said the ant. "I went up there once or twice to see if I could help it, but there was no sound nor stir."

"I am that caterpillar," said the moth gently.

The ant stared and wondered, "I was once a pupa myself," it cried. "But I did not hatch out with such wings as those."

Just then who should come buzzing by but the very bee that had laughed at the caterpillar's house. It, too, stopped to gaze at the wonderful stranger. When it learned that this moth was that very caterpillar it buzzed for wonder. "Well, well!" it said, "so that was what you were about, was it; growing wings in your queer house!"

But the moth stirred itself. "Now I must go,"



Moth, Bee, and Ant

it said. "I must find a shelter under a rock or in some hollow tree until the sun goes down. But to-night—ah, to-night! Then I

shall come out to fly wheresoever I will."

So it waved its great wings and flew softly and noiselessly away out of sight.

The ant and the bee sat looking after it. "And to think," cried the bee, "that we should not have understood what that caterpillar was doing! After all, every one knows his own business best."

LITTLE BROWN HEN

LITTLE BROWN HEN is a brown Bantam.

There are beautiful shadings of blue and red and gold on her feathers, like the colors on burnished metal. She is as slender and prettily shaped as any bird, and her eyes are as bright as a bit of glass.

She is a gentle little thing. She will let her mistress pick her up at any time, and then she will crouch on her mistress' arm, talking softly with little throat sounds.

Little Brown Hen likes to see everything there is to be seen. When the door is left open she comes walking daintily into the house, peering this way and that and making remarks to herself in a low tone.

She peeps into closets and pecks at the string that ties boxes. Sometimes she flies up on the mantel and looks into the jars, or listens to the clock, with her head on one side.

A place that she finds even more interesting than the mantel is the dressing table in her mistress' room.

She goes hop, hopping up the stairs, and then flies upon this dressing table. There she walks up and down and pecks at the rings and brooches to try if they are good to eat.

What interests her most of all, however, is the reflection of herself in the looking-glass. She thinks it is another little brown hen just her own size. She looks at it and talks to it, and every time she lifts her foot or turns her head that other little hen in the mirror does exactly the same. Often after she has talked to it for awhile she walks to the corner of the looking-glass and looks around back of it. Nothing there! Little Brown Hen gives a surprised cluck and steps back, and there directly in front of her is the hen again.

She never gets over the surprise of it.

Little Brown Hen used to be very eager to raise a brood. She was always trying to set, but we did not want her to hatch any of her eggs. We did not want more Bantams.

It was a long time before Little Brown Hen would believe that we were so unkind. Again and again her eggs were taken from her, but again and again she laid more and began to set.

No doubt, as she sat cuddling her small eggs

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under her, she had dreams of cunning, downy little chicks that would grow up into lovely sons and daughters, brown like herself. What pride she would take in them ! What a pleasure it would be to teach them the ways of the house and to show them to that other little brown hen that lived back of the looking-glass !

But when, time after time, and time after time, her eggs were taken from her, Little Brown Hen began to droop. She lost her cheerfulness ; when we lifted her on our arms and talked to her there was a dispirited tone in her voice as she answered us.

At last we could not be hard-hearted any longer. Little Brown Hen must be allowed to have her way. But we would not give her Bantam eggs ; she should have Brahma eggs instead.

When she found she was allowed to set, she was happy indeed.

She was the most devoted little mother even before the eggs hatched. She would sit there on the nest hour after hour, and actually ruffle up at us angrily if we dared to come too near.

She would hardly leave the nest even to eat, and the moment she had finished, back she would hurry

to the nest, afraid that something might have happened to those wonderful eggs.

Little Brown Hen must have been rather astonished at the size of the chickens she hatched out.

However, she led them forth bravely. She scratched and clucked for them just as all hens do, and was busy from morning till night.

But how those chicks did grow! Soon they were so large that when they tried to find shelter under the little hen's wings at night they fairly lifted her from the ground.

Sometimes she looked a little uncomfortable, but still she clucked bravely, and tried to make room for them all under her wings.

Soon they quite outstripped her in size. They were taller than she was—great, ungainly, half-fledged things.

It was funny to see Little Brown Hen scratching away for chickens so much bigger than herself, and to see the long-legged things run when she called them to a worm she had found.

At last they grew too big for Little Brown Hen to pretend any longer that they needed her care.

She began to think about setting again, and we decided to give her some duck's eggs.

Little Brown Hen looked curiously at the broad bills and webbed feet of the new brood that soon hatched out. They were fine looking children no doubt, but still it did seem strange that her chicks should always look so unlike anything she expected.

This brood did not prove as easy to bring up as the other. Still Little Brown Hen managed pretty well until one day the little ducks found a pond.



Little Brown Hen and her Ducklings

Then to their little mother's terror she saw one after another of them hasten to its edge and go sailing off across the water.

In vain the little hen danced up and down calling to them to come back. The naughty ducklings floated happily about over the pond, heedless of their mother's cries.

Little Brown Hen even tried to wade in after them, but the water was too deep and she was obliged to come back to the bank. There she had to wait until the little ducks were ready to return.

After that Little Brown Hen's life was not a happy one.

Regularly every day her disobedient brood started for the pond, waddling in a row, one after the other.

In vain Little Brown Hen scolded and tried to head them off. They always escaped her, and one after another would slip into the water like downy yellow boats and paddle off across the pond.

It was hard on the little mother, and her mistress felt sorry for her. She made up her mind that, as Little Brown Hen had done so well with those two broods, she should have her reward. She should be allowed to set on real Bantam eggs and raise a brood of her very own.

Any one might have thought that Little Brown Hen would be delighted.

But not so. She had other ideas than that. After such large, splendid eggs as she had been hatching she quite scorned to spend her time on any such poor little eggs as those.

She refused to sit on them and left them to

spoil or to be taken care of by some hen of humbler spirit than her own.

As no other eggs were provided for her, Little Brown Hen chose her third brood for herself.

And what do you suppose it was? Three kittens that had been deserted by their mother, and left as poor little orphans in a box in the woodshed.

There Little Brown Hen found them. She sat on the edge of the box for some time, looking curiously at them as they squirmed and mewed below.

Then her mind was made up. Down into the box she hopped and tried to comfort the little orphans with cozy mother sounds.

The kittens were so young that their eyes were not yet open. It hardly seemed possible they could live after their mother left them. When the children found, however, that Little Brown Hen had adopted them as her brood, they made up their minds to save them for her.

So they took turns through the day in feeding the kittens. They fed them from a bottle of warmed milk with a rag stuck in the end of it for them to suck.

At first Little Brown Hen had half a mind not to let us touch the kittens. She seemed to be afraid

we were going to hurt them, and ruffled up her feathers whenever we came near.

Soon, however, she understood that what we were doing was for their good.

Then, when she saw us coming with the bottle, she would fly upon the back of a broken chair close by, and watch the feeding of the kittens. The moment we turned away, she would fly down into the box again.

With so much care from us all, the kittens thrived and grew. One day one of them climbed out of the box. Poor little Brown Hen was almost distracted. She could neither get that one back nor the others out. She flew backward and forward from one place to another, ruffling and entreating and threatening.

At last one of the children came in, and put the kitten back into the box. How delighted and relieved Little Brown Hen was ! She flew back into the box herself and trampled about in it clucking softly, and then settled down calling to the kittens to come under her wings.

When the kittens were old enough to leave the box Little Brown Hen still tried to mother them. She would scratch and scratch until she turned up

a worm or a grain or a beetle. Then she would call to the kittens to come and get it. When they would not touch it she would eye it wistfully, peck at it, and at last eat it herself.

She learned to know, however, that the bringing out of a certain pie plate meant dinner for her furry brood. When the plate was set down she would hurry to it, clucking very urgently. We had no



Little Brown Hen and her Kittens

need to call the kittens ourselves. They knew what that cluck meant and would come running to see what she had for them. She would not allow the other cats nor the terrier Gyp to come near the plate.

While her kittens ate she would walk around and around them with contented little clucks, now and then pecking at a stray morsel herself.

The neighbors used to come in on purpose to see Little Brown Hen and her kittens.

One day one of these visitors brought his dog with him,—a big Newfoundland.

The dog started to chase one of the kittens. If he had caught it his great jaws would have made short work of it. But brave Little Brown Hen flew at him so fiercely and beat him so with her wings that the dog fairly turned tail and ran away yelping.

When the kittens had grown to be almost cats two of them were given away. Little Brown Hen missed them sadly at first. She went about calling, and looking for them everywhere.

Then she devoted herself entirely to the one that was left. The two were always seen together.

When winter came the cat slept at night on the hearth before the kitchen stove. Little Brown Hen scorned the chicken house. She must sleep in the kitchen, too. Every night she perched on the back of a kitchen chair, tucked her head under her wing and slept there till morning.

One night a big rat came out of a hole by the drain pipe. There was Little Brown Hen fast asleep,—a plump, fine morsel for a hungry rat.

She would have had little chance for her life, indeed, against those cruel teeth.

But Little Brown Hen's adopted child was there, no longer a kitten, but a great, brave cat. As the rat was creeping stealthily across the floor the cat pounced upon him. There was a struggle, short but fierce, and then the rat lay dead upon the floor, and Little Brown Hen was saved by her faithful kitten.

The next morning when the cook came downstairs she found the cat busy over the dead rat, and Little Brown Hen looking on curiously from her perch on the chair back.

Many months have passed since that time. The cat is a mother herself now, and Little Brown Hen has raised other broods,—fine strapping chickens that might make any hen proud. But none have ever been quite so dear to Little Brown Hen's heart as those three little kittens she found lying deserted in the box in the woodshed.

BIANCA

BIANCA was a beautiful English setter belonging to Major Smith.

She was a fine hunting dog, and very intelligent. Every fall she went out hunting with her master. They always went on a certain train from a railroad station in the lower part of the city. The conductors on the train knew Bianca.

One day just before the hunting season opened the Major was called away from home on business. Bianca searched the house for him everywhere. Then she trotted down to his office.

Last of all she went to the station. One train after another passed. Bianca waited for the train on which she and her master always traveled. Then she jumped on it. She went in the car and took a seat.

“Hello, Bianca, where’s your master?” asked the conductor.

It was not until the train had started that he found Major Smith was not aboard. Then it was too late to put Bianca off.

She rode to the station where her master always went. There she jumped off, and trotted away toward the open country.

In the evening she was waiting for the train ; she got on, took a seat, and came home again.

This she did every day while her master was

away. She never made a mistake about the time of the trains, nor took the wrong ones. When her master came home she whined and cried with delight, and gave up her trips on the cars.

Bianca's master lived on the outskirts of the city. Opposite the house were fields and a little wood.

Three times a week the butcher came driving along the road and stopped at the Major's house to serve the family with meat. Bianca was always waiting at the gate to meet him. She waited there on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, the days he came ; never on any other day.

Brock, Major Smith's Newfoundland dog, used to follow her out and wait there too. Then the butcher would give them scraps of meat from the wagon.

One day the butcher was slow and the dogs had to wait a long time. Bianca seemed to think it out. There was evidently going to be a short allowance of meat that morning,—barely enough for one. She must get Brock away somehow or other.

Suddenly, just as the butcher's wagon came in sight, she turned her head and pricked up her ears as though she heard something. Then she gave the yelp that meant game, and started toward the wood.

Brock was sure she had seen a rabbit or something. Very much excited he ran after her, wishing to have his share of the fun.

He was a much heavier dog than Bianca and could not go so fast.

She led him far up into the woods and lost him there. Then she came tearing back and looked up



Bianca and the Butcher

eagerly into the butcher's face, wagging her tail as if to say, "Please give me some scraps quickly."

When Brock, panting and with hanging tongue, came hurrying back Bianca had

eaten all the scraps; and the butcher was just shutting up his wagon before driving away.

One time Bianca had a litter of five little puppies.

They were very cunning little things, with plump, warm bodies covered with downy hair. They had wiggly little tails and sprawling legs.

Bianca thought there had never been such wonderful or beautiful puppies before. She was so delighted with them that she could hardly take time to eat during the first few days. The moment anyone came into the woodshed where they were kept

she began to wag her tail so hard you could hear it beating against the side of the box.

Any one might have thought that Bianca would be satisfied with five babies to take care of. So she was at first.

Then one day when Major Smith

went to the woodshed, there in the box with the puppies was a live baby rabbit. Bianca must have gone out to the fields and caught it there.

Bianca looked up at her Master with the proudest, most pleased look, as though to ask, "Well, and what do you think of *that*?"



Bianca with the Rabbit

The next day there were two rabbits in the box.

Bianca was very gentle with the rabbits, but they both died.

She was very anxious when the dead rabbits were carried away. She followed them whining and wagging her tail. The Major told his coachman to shut her up in the woodshed and then to bury the rabbits back of the stable.

When Bianca was allowed to go out, she ran all about looking for the rabbits and whining to herself. She seemed to forget about her puppies and would not pay any attention to them, even when they were crying with hunger. She had to be shut up in the woodshed again, as she would not go back of her own choice.

When, an hour or so later, the Major peeped in there was Bianca curled up in the box with her babies quite contentedly. She wagged her tail as he looked in, but made no attempt to leave them or to look further for the rabbits.

Bianca lived to be very old—so old that all her teeth dropped out, and she could only eat soft foods such as bread and milk.

She reared a great many litters of puppies, but

she never again adopted any rabbits into her family.

JERRY

JERRY was a strong, rough, fierce dog. He was loved only by his master and his master's family, and with them he was never cross. They could tease him and pull his ears and do what they chose to him. He would only wag his stump of a tail, and gaze up in their faces with brown eyes that looked very mildly at them.

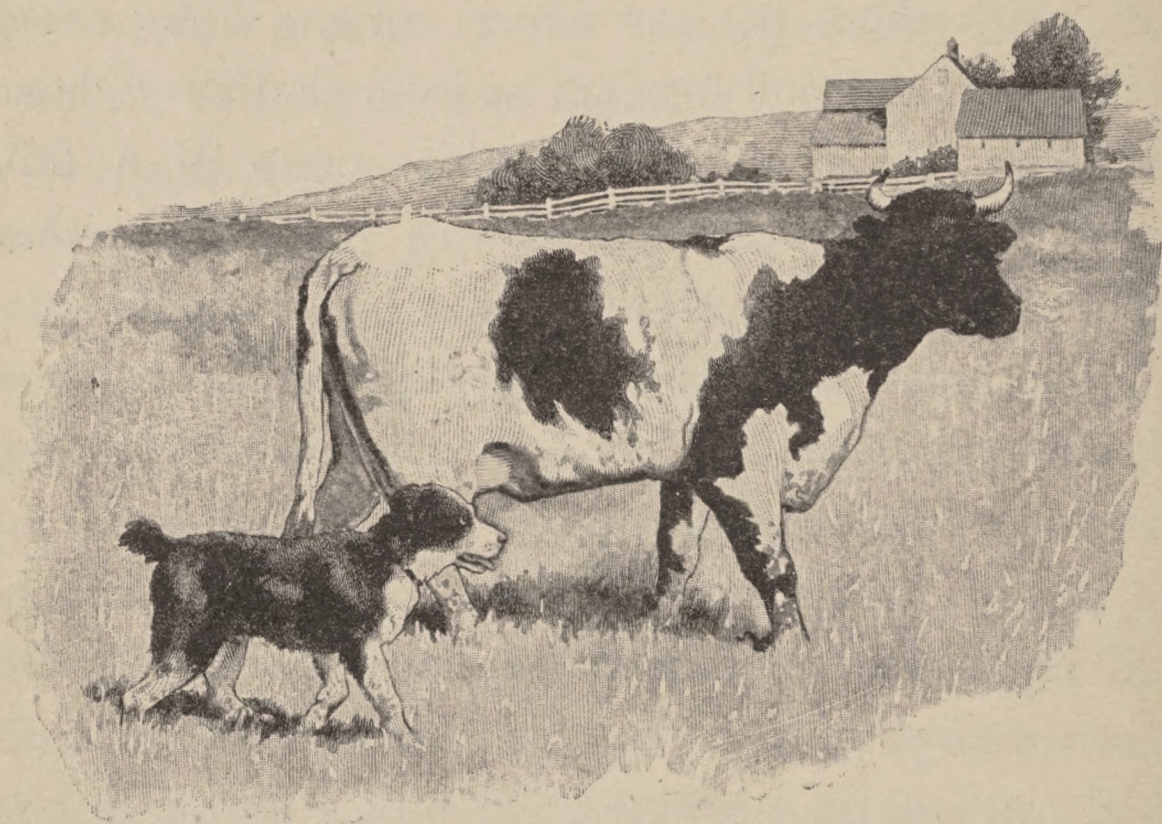
The first few years of Jerry's life were spent on a farm. There he had his own special work to do, and that was herding the cows.

If Jerry was lying quietly in a room with people talking around him, his master had only to say, "Go get the cows now, Jerry," and Jerry would jump up and trot out in a businesslike way. Down to the pasture he would go. There was one place there where he could take the bars down with his teeth. He would do this and drive the cows up to the milking stable. If one of them were missing, Jerry needed only to be told. Then he would trot away again. He would hunt through the pastures and

woods and not come back until he had found the cow and brought it with him.

Only once did he make a mistake. Then he brought home a cow belonging to a neighbor. The cow had broken through into his master's pasture.

"Why, Jerry," said his master when he saw it, "this isn't our cow."



Jerry and the lost Cow

No dog could have looked more ashamed than Jerry did then. His ears drooped; he clapped his little stump of a tail tight down, and turned to slink away. "Go get the other," said his master.

Jerry ran down to the pasture for the third time,

He was gone for quite a while but when he came back he was driving the right cow. Dog and cow were both covered with mud. The cow must have been lost in a swamp.

As long as Jerry lived in the country he was not a cross dog. It was only after his master came to the city to live that he grew so fierce. He did not have enough to do in the city. He had no cows to herd, and so he fought instead.

He would fight any dog no matter how big or how little. Most dogs that will attack a dog smaller than themselves are bullies. They are afraid of big dogs. But Jerry feared no other beast, no matter what might be its size.

When Jerry's master took him out for a walk he fastened a chain to his collar. He kept the dog close to him as long as they were in the city. When they reached the country he would loosen the chain and set him free. He generally waited though until there was no living thing in sight, for Jerry was so delighted at having the chain unfastened that he would rush at anything he saw.

In such cases he had to be punished. But this did very little good. He was so glad when the punishment was over that he generally ran and did

the same thing again. After he had had a brisk run he would quiet down. Then he would even let a dog come up and sniff at him without attacking it.

Jerry's master owned another dog, a black-and-tan terrier named Flicker.

Flicker was a great coward.

When Jerry was punished, his master used a heavy whip ; and Jerry always took his punishment without a sound.

When Flicker was whipped a light switch was used—a switch so light that striking the bare hand with it scarcely stung. But the moment it was raised over him, and before it touched him, Flicker would begin to whine and yelp.

There was nothing the terrier enjoyed more than getting Jerry into a fight. When they were out walking and met a dog Flicker would go up to the stranger, moving his legs stiffly and snarling.

The dog would growl in answer. Then Flicker would glance round at Jerry as if to say, “ Did you hear that ? He's growling at you.”

Jerry's temper could hardly ever stand this. A fight would follow, and Flicker, in high glee, would prance about the heap of dogs, nipping at any leg

or tail that happened to be convenient. Often it was Jerry's leg.

Once when he did this Jerry whirled round from the other dog, and under the excitement of the moment caught Flicker and gave him a good shake. Then seeing who it was, he dropped the terrier immediately and returned to his real enemy.

The little terrier came running over to his master limping, and howling for sympathy. His master was afraid from his cries that he was almost killed, but he was not really hurt at all. He was only frightened.

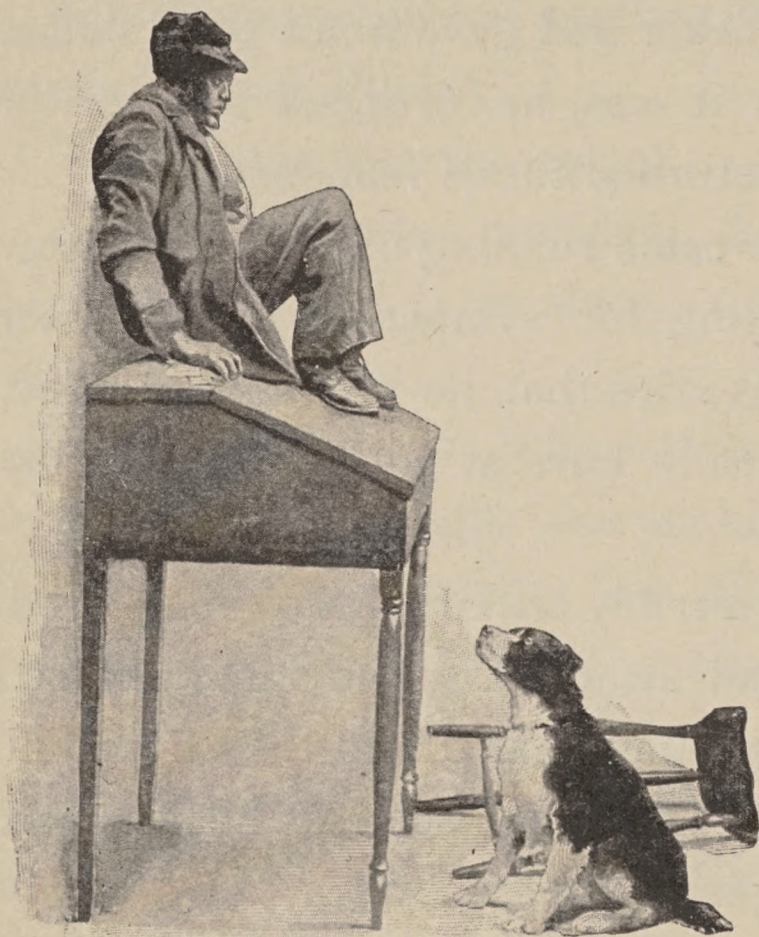
Once Jerry was terribly bitten by two great blood-hounds that he had attacked. The family nursed him until his wounds had healed, and they hoped he had learned a lesson. But as soon as he was well he was just as eager to fight as ever.

One morning the garden gate had been left open and Jerry got out into the street alone. He lingered about for awhile and then trotted down to his master's office.

It was so early that no one was about except the man who attended to the fires. He had left the office door ajar and had gone out for something. When he came back he saw a dog there in the

office. The man shouted and made a motion as if to throw something at the dog.

Instead of running away as the man expected the dog turned and rushed at him with a fierce snarl,



Jerry and his Captive

and such a wicked look that the man was terrified. He had barely time to climb up on a high office desk before those white teeth clicked behind him.

When Jerry's master came down to the office, he found the building still

cold and the fires unmade. On top of the desk the man was crouching, ready to weep with rage and fear. Before the desk was Jerry, still keeping watch and snarling every time the man moved.

Jerry ran to meet his master, his stump of a tail wagging joyfully. His look of pride seemed to say, "Come and see what I've caught for you."

Though Jerry was so bold, there were some things of which he was afraid. He was a perfect coward in a thunderstorm. At the first distant peal of thunder he always showed signs of fear. As the storm came nearer he would rush upstairs and hide under a bed. There he would lie trembling until the storm was over, and the last low mutterings had died away in the distance.

Then he would crawl out looking thoroughly ashamed of himself. The next storm would frighten him just as much.

He was afraid of strange things that he could not understand.

One day a newspaper and an old hat had been thrown out beside the pump. Jerry was trotting through the yard when he saw them. He did not know what they were. He stopped short with a low growl. The hair on his back rose.

Just then the wind stirred the hat, and some one rattled the latch of the alley gate. He could not stand that. He turned tail and ran back to the kitchen as fast as he could go.

Though the dog was gentle with his master and the family, he was so fierce with other people that it did not seem right to keep him in the city. A

good home was found for him—a home in the country where he would have herds to attend to and could be busy and happy.

The children cried when he went away and Jerry tried to lick their faces through the muzzle that had been put on him. The muzzle would be taken off when he was in his new home; and his master said he was sure Jerry would be happier there than he could ever have been in the city.

His master was right, and he heard from the new owner that he had never had a dog on his farm that was as faithful and useful as Jerry proved to be.

BARRY

WHEN Barry first came to the house he was a fat and downy little puppy with paws that seemed too big for him.

He yelped at night when he was left alone and he tore things to pieces as all puppies do. Then when he had done all the mischief he could, he would drop down and go to sleep wherever he happened to be.

He ate great quantities of bread and milk,—half a loaf at a meal,—and grew very fast, but his paws

seemed to grow faster than any of the rest of him. He was always falling over them.

One of the first things the boys tried to teach Barry to do was to follow them. They took him for a long walk, and Barry followed them very well until they turned to come home. Then he sat down in the middle of the road. He was tired.

They called and coaxed, but Barry sat there with his tongue lolling out and his eyes half shut.



The Puppy Barry asleep

He paid no attention to their calling except to beat the dust with his tail. When they pretended to leave him he cried, but he would not walk. At last they had to carry him, big, fat, heavy puppy that he was, all the way home.

After Barry had torn and spoiled a great many skirts and shoes and other things with his puppy teeth, he began to have more sense. He also began to feel his bigness and dignity.

He was a very handsome dog. He was tan-colored with a white line down his forehead and a white breast. The color deepened about his nose to a velvety blackness.

He was so big that his back was on a level with the dining-room table. He could look across it and see what there was to eat, but he was too well-bred to ask for anything.

When Barry wagged his tail in the house he generally knocked something over. Then there was a crash. Barry learned to know this. When we saw something going and shouted "*Barry!*" he would drop his tail hastily and look behind him. His look seemed to say, "Oh dear! What have I done now?"

Once he knocked a little child over by wagging his tail when he stood close by it. When it cried Barry was very sorry. He wanted to lick the tears from its face.

Barry loved all children, and all little helpless things. The children in the street used to run up to him and pat him and hang on to his collar or even his tail. Barry never hurt them or even so much as growled.

At different times several small kittens were

brought to the house. Then Barry could not rest. Every time they moved he moved. If they mewed he was as excited as though such a thing had never been known before. He worried the kittens almost to death by putting his nose so close to them, when they lay down to sleep, that every breath he drew stirred their fur.

In the end they always became very fond of him however. They would play with his ears or tail, and curl up between his paws to sleep. Then Barry would be perfectly happy. He would hardly stir for fear of disturbing them.

But Barry's favorite companion was a pet raccoon. It was brought to the house when it was a little baby thing that had to be fed with a bottle.

Barry was deeply interested. We could not keep him away from the little beast.

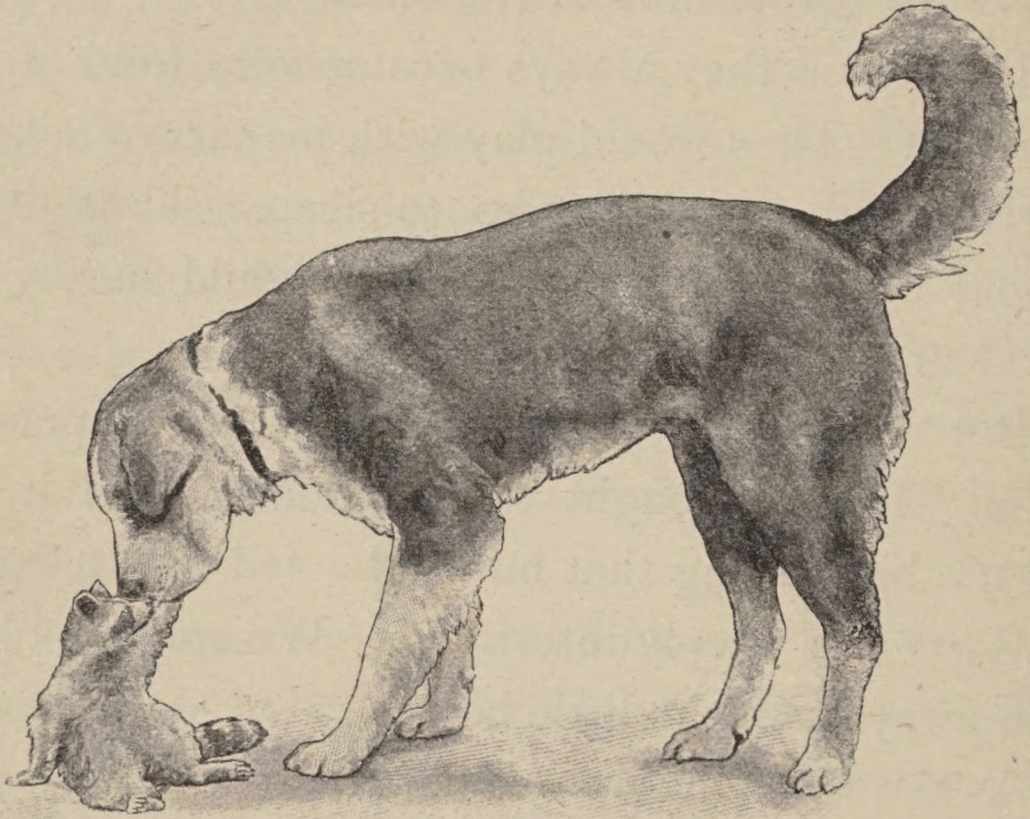
As the raccoon grew older it used to play with Barry. Sometimes it bit him so sharply in its play that Barry yelped.

Coonie delighted in teasing Barry when he was trying to sleep. It would steal up and nip his ears, or his feet. It annoyed him more than the flies.

When he was gnawing a bone the raccoon would lift his lips and try to pull it away from him. It

liked to tuck nuts and things under his broad collar. But Barry was never cross to it.

After it died he hunted for it everywhere with an anxious look. For years afterward if any one called "Connie, Coonie," Barry would start up eagerly and look all around,—back of sofas and chairs, or out



Barry and the Raccoon

in the hall. Then he would come back and look into his mistress' face, and whine. He seemed never to forget his little friend.

Barry's mistress always felt perfectly safe when he was with her. One evening she had to go out on an

errand. As there was no one to go with her but Barry, she took him along. He trotted a little in front of her, his tail waving cheerfully.

In a dark and lonely place they met a loungee. Barry stopped with a low, deep growl. He waited until his mistress caught up with him. He walked along close at her side being careful to keep between her and the man until they had passed him.

Then Barry dropped back. He turned his head and looked at the man with a low growl that seemed to say "Remember, I am here," and trotted on behind his mistress. He knew he was her protector and was proud of it.

Barry was polite to everybody and expected in return to be treated with respect. He would not forgive an insult. Once the grocer's boy came to the house with some groceries. Barry knew him well and was always friendly.

This day the boy was impatient or out of humor. Barry was in his way and the boy gave him a little kick. It was not a hard kick but Barry's dignity was terribly hurt. His eyes flashed. He sprang up with a deep growl. He would have jumped upon the boy if one of the family had not been there to stop him.

Barry never forgave that kick. Whenever the boy came to the house Barry gave a low growl and walked away. The boy became so much afraid of him that he persuaded some one else to bring the groceries to the house.

Barry's great-grandfather had belonged to the monks of the hospice or monastery of St. Bernard in the Alps in Switzerland, and it was said that he had saved the lives of twenty travelers who had been lost in the snow at one time or another.

It must have been some instinct come down to Barry from this great-grandfather that made him act as he did when the boys wrapped themselves in shawls and lay still. They did this sometimes to see what he would do.

After they had lain perfectly motionless for awhile Barry would grow very anxious. He would whine and poke them with his nose. If they did not stir he would paw them over. If that did no good he would begin nipping them through the shawl, at first gently, then harder and harder, until they were obliged to move.

When at last they stirred Barry would be perfectly delighted. He would jump about with heavy gambols until the windows shook.

Once or twice the boys took Barry with them when they were going swimming. But as soon as he saw them splashing in the water he grew very much excited. He was afraid they were drowning. He almost drowned one of the boys himself by going in after him, catching him by the arm, and dragging him to the shore in spite of his struggles. After that the boys left Barry at home when they were going swimming.

But Barry was to have his tale of a saved life. One time, out in the country, the baby of the family had run away from her nurse. She was playing at throwing sticks into the water. The water was a mill stream and very swift.

Again and again Barry caught the child by the skirts and drew her away from the shore. At last the child grew angry. She was about to throw a stick in the stream when Barry caught her by the skirt again.

The child turned and struck at him. That made her lose her balance. She fell backward into the water with a great splash.

Instantly Barry plunged in after her. He caught her by the frock and swam against the stream that swept down toward the mill wheel. The bank was

too steep for him to climb out and the current swept him down with it in spite of his struggles.

But a man who was passing along the road had seen the accident. He ran and threw himself down beside the mill stream and reaching over caught the child. He pulled her out, and then Barry could climb out by himself.

If the family had been fond of Barry before, you may be sure that they loved him after that. Barry lived to be very old, and few dogs have had a happier life or been more petted than he. He deserved it, too, for he was brave and faithful and noble.

FAX

FAX was a homeless, starved, forsaken cur. Nobody seemed to want him. He had been driven from one place after another, sometimes with threats, sometimes with blows. When the Wilsons first saw him he was trying to find something to eat among the scraps in their garbage bucket.

"Poor thing," said Mrs. Wilson. Then she called to the cook who had appeared threateningly at the kitchen door: "Don't drive the poor thing away. He looks almost starved."

After the cur had gotten all he could from the bucket, he went away. But he came back before many days, and then again and still again. He began to seem to feel at home in the yard, sometimes curling up in a corner of it and going to sleep there.

It was so quiet and pleasant. No one threatened him or drove him away. When any of the family came into the yard, he would look up at them appealingly and beat the ground with his tail.

After a while he made friends with the kitchen cat. Often they would eat together from the plate of scraps that the cook set out for them. This pleased the cook so much that sometimes, when the nights were cold, she allowed the cur to come in and sleep before the fire.

He had been very abject while all the world was against him, but now that he had something of a home he began to pluck up a little spirit. Once he even barked at a tramp who came to the door, though immediately afterward he dropped his tail and looked ashamed, seeming to feel he had gone too far.

One evening when the library door was open the cur's head appeared peeping around the jamb at the assembled family. Then he crept farther in,

his tail down and wagging humbly, his look seeming to say, "May I come in?"

They did not encourage his hopes, however. He was driven down to the kitchen, and the hall door was closed. But the next day while the Wilsons were at dinner his white face appeared again at the dining-room door.

The family had a Skye terrier, very old and fat. His one accomplishment was sitting up to beg. He went around the table from one person to another, begging and waving his feathery paws. Some of them rewarded him with bits of food from the table.

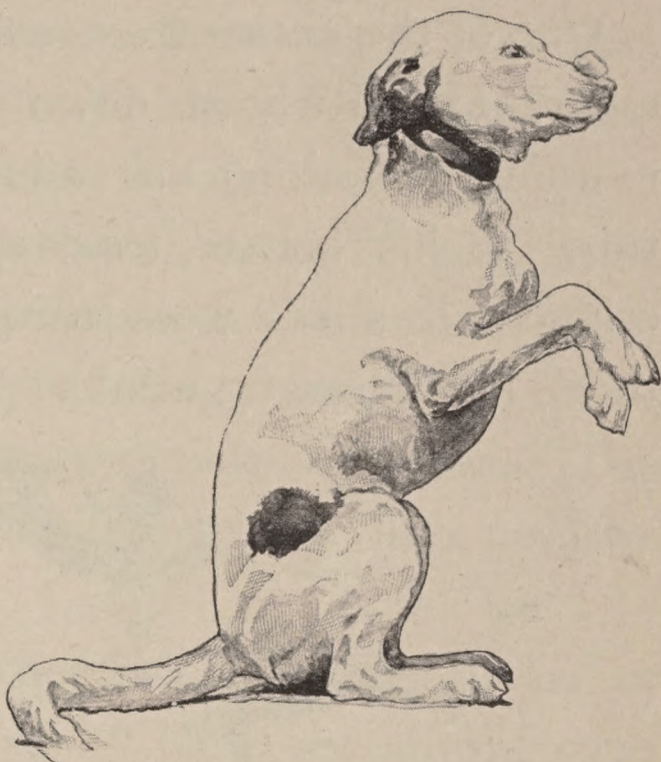
The cur watched the terrier awhile from the half-open door. Then he gravely walked across the floor to Mrs. Wilson, sat down, and after one or two attempts lifted his front paws from the ground and begged just as he had seen the other dog do.

It was so clever of him to do that of himself that everybody laughed and applauded. After that the cur was accepted as one of the family. He was allowed to come and go as he chose, and was given the name of Fax.

The little Skye was very jealous. He growled and snarled and tried to pick a quarrel with the new dog. But Fax was very quiet and dignified.

He was not afraid, but he would not fight, and if the terrier grew too unpleasant he simply rose and walked away to another part of the room.

The eldest son of the family, Mr. Richard, as the servants called him, thought he would see if he could not teach Fax some more tricks, since he had been so clever about learning



Fax Begging

to beg. Every evening he gave Fax a lesson and it was wonderful how quickly the dog learned. Before long he would roll over and play dead dog at the word of command, leap through a hoop, sit up and beg with something on his nose, then toss it up in the air and catch it in his mouth, close the door and fetch a glove, a shoe or a letter as he was told.

In return for these lessons Fax adopted Mr. Richard as his especial master to be followed and obeyed. The obeying was all right, but as to the

following, his master did not always care for his company.

One of the duties Fax took upon himself was to escort Mr. Richard down to the office every morning. Nothing was allowed to interfere with this. If his master tried to scold him, back he cringed; if sticks were thrown at him he dodged them, but follow he would.



Fax with a Shoe

At last the young man was obliged to give up and allow the cur to go with him. Then Fax was a proud and happy dog. Every morning he was

ready and waiting, trotting off at Mr. Richard's side with ears up and tail curled jauntily over his back. If any dog dared even to look at him he growled haughtily. He never tried to go into the office. After seeing his master safely there he would turn and trot home again by himself, quite contented.

And now every day Fax grew more and more proud and dignified. When he first came to the

house he had been so humble-minded that he was very grateful to be noticed at all, and eager to learn tricks and show them whenever they were called for. But now he refused to do anything unless he felt in the humor for it.

One day some visitors were at the Wilsons' when Fax came strolling quietly into the parlor where they sat. Mrs. Wilson began telling them what a clever dog he was and how many tricks he knew. The visitors said they would like to see him perform some of them.

"I don't know whether he'll do them to-day or not," said Mrs. Wilson. "He's not always very obedient." Then she told Fax to close the door, but he only sat down in the middle of the room and looked around him cheerfully. He would not jump, he would not fetch a glove; he would not do anything but play dead dog, and then, when he had



Playing "Dead Dog"

once lain down he would not get up again. There he stayed stretched at length until the visitors rose to go. Then he jumped

up and politely escorted them to the door.

Mrs. Wilson felt mortified by his behavior, but when she told her son of it he only laughed.

Mr. Richard was soon to be married, and one day Mrs. Wilson said, "I suppose when you have a home of your own you'll take Fax with you."

"I don't know," he answered; "I hadn't thought of it."

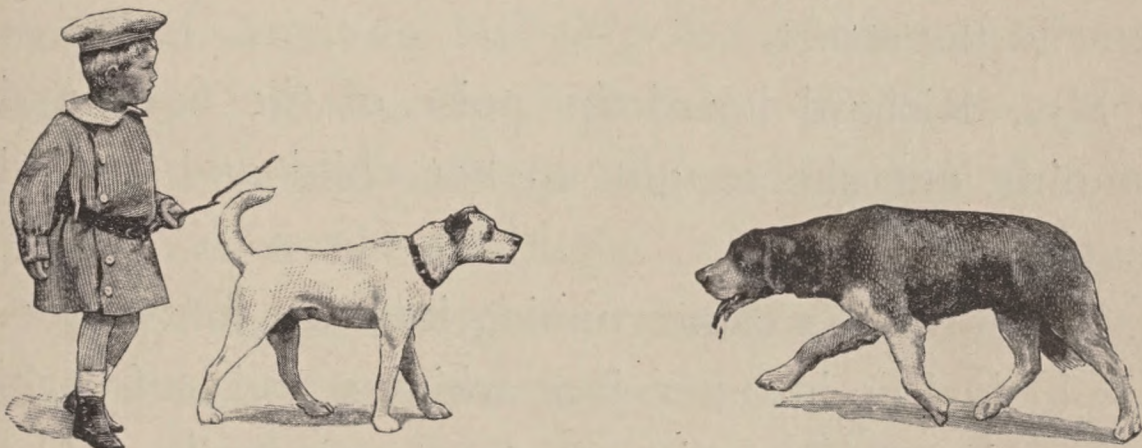
Fax however decided that matter for himself. The family was all very well, but he felt his place was with his master. So when Mr. and Mrs. Richard moved into their new house Fax moved there too, only coming back now and then to call at his old home.

Fax found his new mistress quite to his mind, even if she did laugh at him and call him "obstinate Fax." There was only one thing about which they had a standing quarrel. Whenever the door of the guest chamber was left open Fax would go in and get on the bed. There he would snuggle down under the covers with only his head showing as it lay upon the pillow.

His mistress kept a little switch, and whenever she found him there she switched him. The punishment did not hurt Fax much but it offended him deeply. After it had happened, he would not take

any notice of his mistress or have anything to do with her, sometimes for a whole day.

Time slipped by, and after a while there was a little master in the new house,—a baby boy, and his name too was Richard. Fax was very much interested in the baby. He no longer followed his older master down to the office. Instead he slept beside the baby's crib or walked beside the baby-carriage as the nurse wheeled it through the streets. He seemed to feel it his special charge. As the baby grew to be first



Fax to the Rescue

a toddler and then a sturdy little boy, Fax was still his devoted companion.

One day the little child was playing on the pavement before the house. Fax, now grown to be quite an old dog, lay upon the steps watching him.

Suddenly around the corner came a large and dangerous looking dog. It was frothing at the mouth and now and then it turned its head aside

and snapped at the air. The little boy stopped his play and watched it coming. There was no one else in sight. Fax too had seen the dog. He rose, and the hair bristled on his back. Then he sprang down and placed himself before the child.

On came the dog directly toward them. Fax seemed to feel there was something wrong with it. As it came so close that in a moment it would have to turn aside or be upon them, Fax gave a snarl and sprang at its throat. Then they tumbled over and over in the street.

Mrs. Richard heard the noise of the fight, and running out she caught up her child and carried him into the house.

Presently Fax came running into the house, too. He looked up into her face whining and half barking. His neck was bitten but not very badly. The big dog had shaken itself free and trotted on down the street.

A few blocks further on it was shot, for its master had come running after it with a gun. He said it was mad.

The man wanted to shoot Fax, too, when he heard he had been bitten. But his mistress said no. She shuddered and turned white at the

thought of the danger from which the faithful dog had saved her little son. She said they would shut Fax up where he would be safe, but she could not bear the thought of his being killed unless it was perfectly certain that he was going mad.

Fax's master said the same. He longed to show his gratitude to Fax. How they petted and praised him.

They were obliged to shut him up, however, where he could not get away. They gave him every care and attention but very soon he drooped and sickened. It was hydrophobia. When he grew worse it seemed only the best and kindest thing to put an end to his sufferings.

In his master's yard now stands a little headstone and on it are these words :—

IN LOVING AND GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF FAITHFUL FAX.

THE TWO LITTLE CRABS

ALL along the miles of hard, flat beach the waves rush up to break with a long roar. Then they slip back into the ocean only to come roaring back again.

Far away from the cottages and big hotels is a stretch of shore called Pebbly Beach. It is very lonely there, with no sound but the rush of the breakers and the cries of the sea gulls. Little sandpipers with legs no thicker than straws run up and down hunting for things to eat. The white sand fleas that are washed up on the beach with the waves make haste to burrow down out of sight in the wet sand. They are afraid the sandpipers will catch them.

Scattered about this beach are many sea shells. They are all around, but the greatest number are down in a shallow salt pool that lies in a hollow of the sand.

These shells do not lie still. They move about as though they were alive.

This is not magic. Anyone looking closely at the shells would see peering out from almost every one of them something that looks like two staring eyes. He would also see two little claws and perhaps four little spiny legs put out to walk.

These belong to the hermit crabs who find these shells and then curl themselves in them as though they were little houses, and live there.

There used to be one shell in this pool that was

perhaps the prettiest of all. It was such a shell as one does not often see; beautifully curled and curiously marked with greenish colorings. It had washed up after a storm from far away.

The little crab who lived in this shell was very proud of it. He curled his soft tail comfortably inside and held it tight with a sucker. Then he walked about as he chose to go. With that shell to protect him, there was no fear of being gobbled up by some of the greedy beach birds. He would feel quite safe even if the breakers rose so high that he was washed out to sea.

When the crab first found the shell, he was quite little—so small that it was almost too big for him to drag about.

But day followed day, and as time passed the little crab grew and grew.

The shell did not grow, however, and so after a while it began to be too small for him. It was a beautiful little house, but it was a tight fit.

“Yes, there is no doubt about it; I need a larger shell,” said the crab.

“Yes you do. You certainly do need a larger shell,” said a smaller crab who had crawled up close to him.

The larger crab looked at the other. "I should think you would be looking for another shell yourself," he said; "yours must be a tight fit for you. And more than that it is a very ugly shell. Why didn't you hunt up a pretty one while you were about it?"

The smaller crab twiddled his feelers. "Oh I will wait awhile," he said. "Maybe I'll find a better house without bothering myself to hunt."

After that wherever the larger crab crawled the smaller one kept close beside him. The big crab was now really hunting for another shell, but none of them seemed just what he wanted.

"Why don't you try them?" the little one kept asking him. "Why don't you try them?"

"But they're none of them what I want," said the larger crab.

"How can you tell that? For all you know, any one of them might do if you were not too lazy to try."

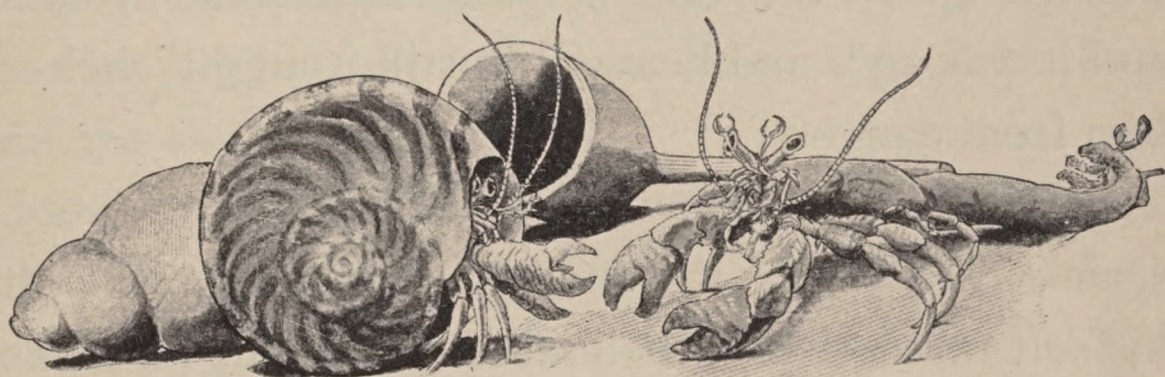
So he kept on taunting the other with being too lazy to get out of his shell until the larger one began to be quite ashamed. "Well, I will try one," he said at last, "but I know it won't do."

He unfastened his sucker and crawled out of his

house. No sooner was he well out of it, however, than whisk ! the smaller crab had popped out of his own ugly little shell and into the handsome one that belonged to the other.

“Wait ! Wait a bit !” cried the larger crab. “This new shell will not do for me at all. I can’t even get into it. I must have my own house back.”

“Must you indeed !” cried the other, “We’ll see about that. I mean to keep it myself since you



Two Little Crabs

were dunces enough to leave it,” and he looked at the other fiercely with his little pop-eyes, and shrank back into the shell so that only his sharp claws were out.

Now the larger one was in a bad way indeed. He was too big to get into the shell that he had found or into the one that the smaller crab had left empty.

"Never mind!" cried the little thief, as it peered out from the stolen house. "You needn't bother about finding a shell. Something will come along and eat you up in a minute. You'll be a dainty morsel."

The houseless crab looked wildly about him. Where could he find a shelter? Where hide himself?

Close by he saw an old clay pipe that had been washed up by the ocean. The stem was broken and it was ugly and heavy, but still it might shelter him from danger.

Suddenly a shadow passed across the pool. Quick as a flash the crab was in the pipe with his soft tail curled up behind him and only his claws showing.

How the smaller crab in the stolen shell twiddled his feelers and jeered at him! "Well, I'm going," he cried, "I find this a very good shell, thank you. Very much better than what I had."

He put out his legs to walk. Then suddenly he curled them up again, drawing as far back into his house as he could. There was a heavy rumbling on the beach that came nearer and nearer. They could hear it down in the salt pool.

“Weet ! Weet !” cried the sandpipers, and they lifted their legs and flew away.

A broad-wheeled carriage was driving along over the hard, wet sand close to the edge of the waves.

“This is Pebbly Beach,” said the driver. “Plenty of shells here, Professor.”

“Oh, papa, mayn’t I get out and gather some?” cried a little girl who was on the front seat.

“Yes ; I’ll get out too,” said the Professor. “I feel quite cramped with driving.”

He climbed out and then lifted the child down on the sand.

“Oh, look at the shells!” she cried. “Heaps of them. Oh, where’s my bucket ? And just look at these in the pool. Aren’t they beauties ?” She took one out of the water, but a moment after she threw it from her with a cry. “Ugh ! There’s a horrid bug in it.”

Her father laughed as he lifted the shell and looked at it. “It’s nothing but a little hermit crab,” he said. “You’ve frightened him more than he frightened you. That shell is his little house.”

He picked up one shell after another from the pool and in each one was a frightened crab.

“Never mind, my dear. You have plenty of

shells like these," he said. "They are none of them very pretty."

"This one is," said the little girl. She had picked the very one the thievish little crab had stolen. "But it has something in it, too."

Her father took it from her. "Why, this is rather a rare shell," he said. "I've never seen one like it on this beach before. We must add this to our collection."

"But it has something in it, papa."

"We'll manage to get that out somehow. Let us see if we can find any more like it."

He began to look more carefully. Presently he came upon the old pipe with the crab curled up inside it. "Come look here, little daughter," he said. "Here's a curious thing. I suppose this poor little crab couldn't find a shell, so it had to take shelter in this heavy, ugly pipe. Let us look about and find a better house for it."

"But would it go into it if it had it?" asked the child.

"Yes, indeed, and be glad of it."

The Professor began to search about the beach for a better house for the little crab.

"I know," said the child. "I'll get one of those

I have in my bucket in the carriage. I'll pick out a pretty one, too, because he must have been such a poor little crabby to have to live in an ugly house like that."

The little girl ran over to the carriage, and when she came back she had a pretty shell in her hand.

She put it down in the water in front of the crab, and then she and her father waited very quietly hoping to see him move into his new home.

But he was much too frightened. He only curled up closer in the pipe.

It was not until they had been gone some time that he had the courage to look out from his shell again.

Everything was as quiet and lonely as ever.

Then in a twinkling he was out of the clumsy pipe and into the new house set ready for his use.

And what a fine house it was ! Light and pretty and just the right size.

"I wonder what became of that poor little crab they carried off with them," he said, as he settled himself in his new home. "I wonder."

But he never knew.

JAMES CROW

His name was not Jim, but *James* Crow ; and a very dignified gentleman he looked as he walked across the lawn all dressed in black, and cawing gently to himself.

He was a very young bird when we bought him from a ragged little boy in the country.

After we had bought him we put him in an old soft hat, closed the brim gently over him and carried him home in that fashion.

He was very quiet all the way, and when we released him at last he sat all crouched together for a while. Then he straightened himself out and began to settle his wings and to look about him with his round bright eyes.

Some food was brought in, and a piece was offered to him. James gulped it down greedily, and immediately all timidity or strangeness was forgotten.

He opened his beak wide, spread his wings, and stooped his body, all the while cawing and crying wildly to us for more.

That was James' first introduction to the house,

but very soon he was as much at home there as though he had lived with us all his life.

We clipped the feathers of one of his wings so that he could not fly away, and then turned him out on the lawn. But James liked the house better, and came in upon every occasion. Then nothing was safe. He tore the leaves of books with his sharp, hard beak. He tore a bunch of peacock feathers quite to pieces. He stole everything that he took a fancy to.

Whenever anything was missing—that is any small thing—James was immediately suspected, perhaps not always fairly. We wondered whether he had any special place for hiding things and one of the boys said he was going to watch him and find out.

We put temptation in his way in the shape of a long bright-red ribbon. We knew James never could resist anything as bright as that. We laid it on the lawn where James would be apt to see it and then Ned hid around the corner of the house, keeping a sly watch on the ribbon.

Presently up came James with his dignified walk. He hurried his steps a little as he saw the ribbon, and stopped beside it cocking his head this side and that.

Here was a find indeed, and no one in sight to scold him or to shout to him to drop it. In a moment James had seized the ribbon and was hurrying across the lawn with it and on down the lane.

Ned followed, taking care that the crow should not see him. Down at the very end of the lane was an old willow tree.

James flew up into this with the ribbon, and then Ned lost sight of him among the branches.

Presently James flapped down into the lane again. He did not have the ribbon. He stopped to rub his beak on the grass. Then he walked idly up the lane again, cawing gently to himself. After he was out of sight Ned came from behind the hedge where he had been hiding and swung himself up into the willow tree.

There he found a hollow among the branches, and in this hollow was the greatest collection of things,—a ball of yarn, a rusty jack-knife, a screw, two apple cores, a peach stone and a silver thimble.

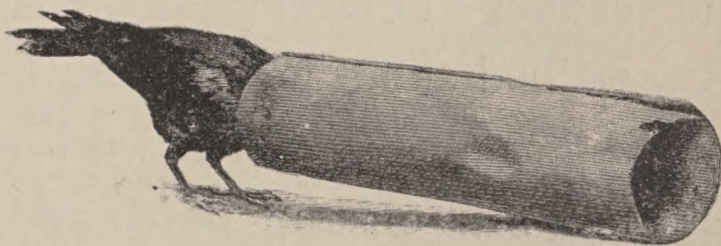
Ned took the thimble and the jack-knife, and then slid down the tree leaving the other things undisturbed. It seemed a good thing to let the crow still think no one knew of his hiding spot. Then if

he stole anything of real value, the loser would know where to look for it.

James was very greedy from the time he was a young bird, and it was a fault he never got over. His dinner hour was a time when all dignity was cast aside.

As soon as he saw anyone coming with a dish of food he would hurry forward with outspread wings and loud cries. Stopping in front of the person, he would fairly dance up and down in his eagerness, cawing all the time.

As each piece of meat was thrown to him he would gulp it down with a



James and the Stovepipe

choked caw, and then dance and shriek again with open beak.

When the last morsel had been given him, and he had made sure of the fact that there was no more, he would fold his wings sedately. With his usual dignity he would walk away to some quiet spot. There he would disgorge the hastily swallowed meat and eat it again at his leisure.

One time the boys teased James by putting some

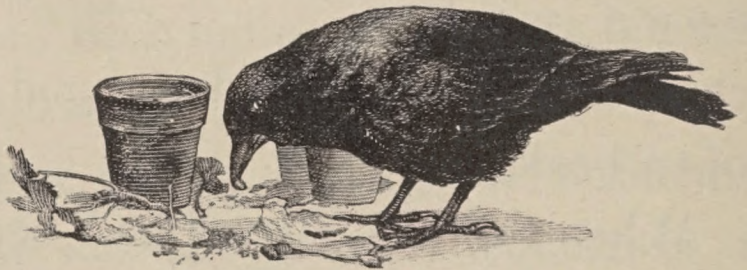
meat in the middle of a piece of stovepipe that was too small for him to get into.

The crow tried to squeeze himself in first at one end and then at the other.

Finding he could not manage this after several attempts, James lifted one end of the stovepipe and let the meat slip down to the other. Then he hurried around and seized the prize.

James was like a monkey in liking to imitate what he saw others doing. One morning the mistress of the house was busy planting some slips and seedlings in flower pots. As she worked, the crow walked about her, cawing softly to himself.

When she finished her work she put the flower pots in a row on the porch and went away. No sooner was she out of sight than James was busy. In haste, as though he knew



James and the Plants

that if anyone saw him he would be driven off, he pulled up every one of the plants, laying them side by side on the porch.

Then he looked about for something to put in their places.

On the window sill was a bag of candies, left there by little Annie. Her aunt had brought them to her the day before.

With these the crow filled the holes left in the earth, covering them carefully with the loose soil. Then he went away to look for something else to do.

When Annie came back for her candies they were nowhere to be found; instead was the empty bag. "I do believe those greedy boys have eaten up all my candies," cried the little girl, her lip trembling and her eyes filling with tears. But her brothers declared they had not touched them.

While she was still wondering and complaining her mother found the plants where they lay dead and withered in the sun. "Oh, that mischievous crow!" cried the mother, running her finger down into the loose earth. "Why, what's this?" she added, for she felt something hard. She dug it out with her finger. It was one of Annie's candies, gritty with soil.

The earth was emptied from the other flower pots and then all the candies came to light.

The mother said they were spoiled, but Annie didn't think so. She brushed them off very carefully and she and her brothers ate them later on.

James did not like to be touched or handled. He would not allow any of the children except his master to pick him up.

He never showed his really finest manners however to anyone but the mother; when she came out of the house he would hurry to meet her, ducking and bowing in the most absurd manner, and cawing softly.

James' master tried to teach James to talk, and declared that the crow really tried to call him by name. The others would hardly believe it.

But at any rate James could laugh. He often used to startle people by harsh peals of laughter as he sat hidden among the shrubbery. He seemed to be enjoying some huge joke all by himself among the leaves.

All through the summer and winter, James seemed very happy in his half-captive life. But when spring came, and everything was bursting into bud and the birds were busy about their nesting, the poor crow drooped and seemed sad.

He would crouch on the lawn looking up at the moving clouds above, and sometimes when he heard the wild crows out in the fields he would half spread his wings with an answering caw.

The mother said it was cruel to keep him away from his kind, and so his master agreed to let his clipped wing feathers grow.

Even after they had grown, however, James seemed in no hurry to leave his old home.

To be sure he did go farther afield, but he always came back at night.

At last, however, there came a night when James did not return, though he reappeared the next day. Then he went away again and that time he did not come back at all.

It was not until the fall that they saw anything of him. Then one day as one of the boys was crossing a plowed field a crow flew down on a furrow near by with a friendly caw.

“James, James!” called the boy.

The crow cocked his head on one side and seemed to listen.

“James, come here, old fellow,” said the boy again.

He went over toward the crow and it sat quite still watching him until he was so close that he put out his hand to touch it.

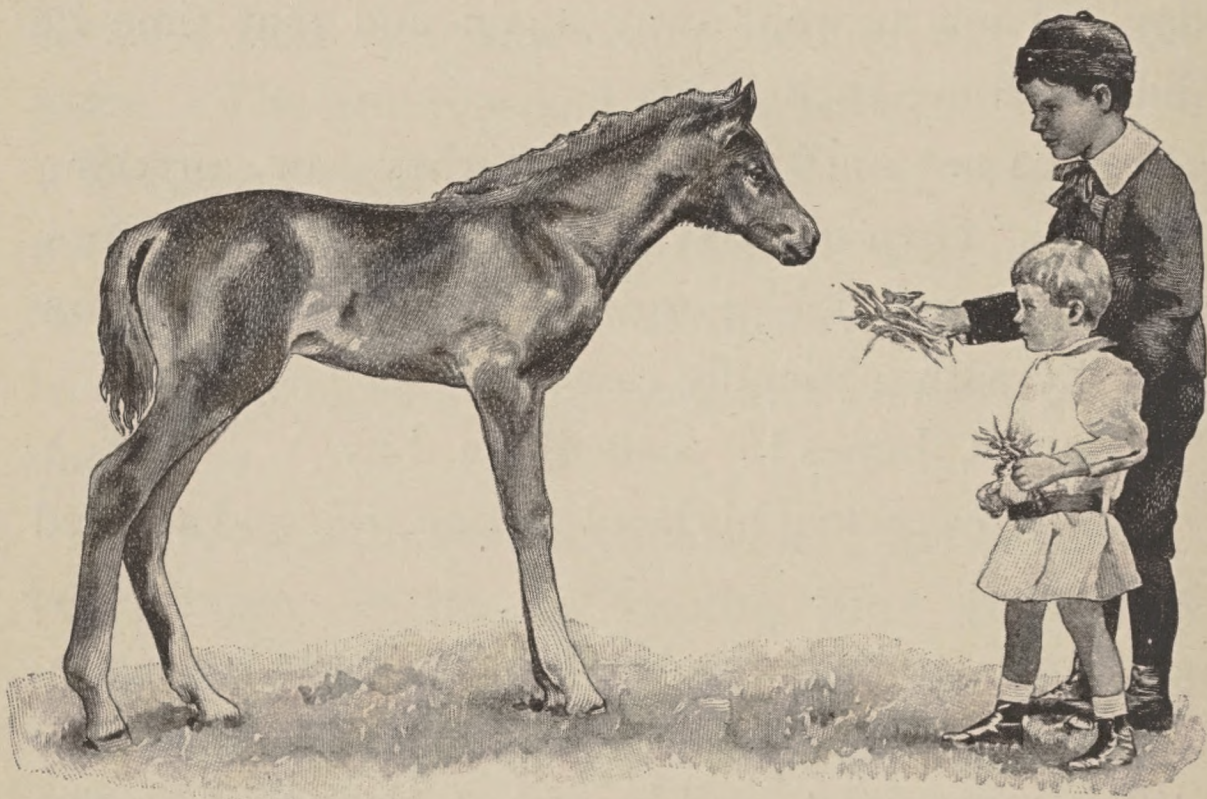
Then it rose with a caw and flew away, flapping heavily across the blue sky, on and on beyond the hill and out of sight.

And that was the last glimpse that any one of the family ever had of James Crow.

FIREFLY

FIREFLY was a beautiful little chestnut colt with one white foot.

She was a great pet with the children, and she



Firefly and the Children

was so tame she would come up and eat grass from their hands. Then she would poke them with her velvety nose and gallop off across the field kicking

up her heels, and seeming to say, "Come play with me."

Once she caught hold of the end of a handkerchief that was sticking from the pocket of one of the children. In a moment, with a jerk of her head, she had pulled it out and was cantering away with it.

The little boy whose handkerchief it was ran after her to get it, but she kept out of his reach. She waited until he was so close that he could almost touch her, and then away she galloped, tossing her head as if to wave the handkerchief. All around the field she went, and then coming back she stopped just in front of him with alert eyes and ears pricked forward. It was as if she said, "*Now* try to catch me."

At last with a quick motion the boy did catch one end of the handkerchief. He pulled and she pulled, and it ended in the handkerchief being torn almost in two.

The mother of Firefly had been a famous jumper, and as Firefly grew older she became a great jumper herself. It was difficult to keep her in any field. She would go over a five-barred fence as lightly as a bird.

Her master was very proud of her.

When she was old enough he broke her to the saddle, and he did not like to have anyone else ride her. She knew him, and when she saw him coming she would turn her head and whinny to him. He often brought her an apple or a lump of sugar, and if he did not have it in his hand she would nose at his pockets to see if he had not hidden something about him.

Firefly was gentle as well as swift and spirited. She was the best hunter in the neighborhood, but when the children begged to ride her, and their father set them in a row upon her back, she minced around the lawn as smoothly as she could, trying not to jolt them.

When Firefly was six years old a war broke out, and Firefly's master said that he must go away and fight for the right. His wife wept, but she did not say no.

He put on his uniform and Firefly was brought around to the door. She arched her neck and pawed the ground proudly as she stood waiting. The master's wife and children clung to him and he kissed them again and again. Then he came hastily down the steps, his spurs jingling, and

sprang upon Firefly's back, and away they went ; —away from the quiet, peaceful home life toward the smoke and thunder of battle.

Firefly had much to learn in the days that followed. She had to learn to march with other horses. She had to learn what the words of command meant, and the loud and thrilling calls of the bugle.

Then Firefly and her master were ordered forward to the place where the war was the fiercest.

At last came a day when a great and bloody battle was fought. Firefly and her master were in it. At first, as they stood waiting for the order to charge, Firefly quivered all over, and the sweat ran down her sides like water she was so afraid.

But when at last the order was given, and her master's troop swept forward, the chestnut mare was at the head and all fear was forgotten. Behind was the thunder of hoofs, before were the ranks of the enemy, and all around was a murderous rain of bullets. On went Firefly like the wind, her nostrils wide ; one delicate ear pricked back for the word of command ; her hoofs beating steadily on the flying ground.

It was a brave charge, but it was not successful. The enemy was too strong, and the order to retreat was given.

It was in this retreat that her master was struck by a bullet. Firefly suddenly felt him give a violent start. She did not see him put his hand to his side



Firefly and her wounded Master

however. She did not see that that hand was stained with red.

On he rode, but now he was swaying in the saddle. His face grew drawn and white. Then without a sound he slipped and tumbled to the ground and lay still in a crumpled heap.

When consciousness came back to Firefly's master the first thing he saw was something chestnut colored and something blue. There was a roaring in his ears.

Then he heard the ping of flying bullets, and saw that the chestnut color was Firefly, standing over him, and the blue was the sky beyond as he lay looking up.

He was still on the battlefield. He was there alone; alone with the dead and wounded. His friends were gone. And yet he was not alone after all. His faithful Firefly was with him.

He was not holding her bridle; there was nothing to keep her. She was trembling with fear, and she smelled the blood around, but she would not desert her fallen master.

He raised himself on his elbow, and Firefly whinnied. Then, staggering, he got upon his feet. He mounted Firefly and gathered up the reins, and then away they fled, fast, fast across the field, back to safety.

Firefly's master was so badly wounded that he was sent to a hospital. Firefly followed back of the ambulance in which they carried him. For a long time after that she was not ridden at all.

One day her master's wife, her mistress, came to where she stood. The mistress kissed her on the neck and wept.

All this while, though Firefly did not know it, her master was very ill. When at last he was able to be moved he was taken home, for he was not strong enough to go back to the war.

Firefly hardly knew him when she saw him again, he was so gaunt and white, and one sleeve was empty and was pinned across his coat.

After a while he grew strong again and was able to ride about, but he held the bridle in his right hand now.

Firefly was so glad when she felt him upon her back again that she curved her neck and pranced proudly.

"Good horse," said her master. He could not pat her neck for his one hand held the bridle, but his tone was like a caress. "Except for you——" Then his voice broke as he thought of his wife and children, and how, but for Firefly, he would have died upon that field of battle.

If Firefly was loved and petted before you may imagine how it was with her now. Even when she grew so old that she could no longer be used, there

was no horse in her master's stable that was held in such honor as she.

THE STORY OF A SLAVE

PART I.

NIPPER was a little slave ant.

She had been a slave from the moment she had opened a hole in her cocoon and other slave ants had drawn her out, straightened her antennæ and smoothed out her soft legs.

Nipper did not know then that she was a slave. All around her she saw little black ants like herself, hurrying to and fro intent on business.

Those who had drawn her out of the cocoon did not stay with her long, but hurried away to offer the same help to others, that is, to draw out from their cocoons those who were too weak to free themselves.

Nipper sat there beside her cocoon looking about her, but feeling too soft and helpless to stir.

Presently she began to move her legs a little.

Then an ant came to her and fed her from its mouth with something as sweet as honey.

That made Nipper feel stronger, and as she

saw how busy everyone about her was, she began to wonder if she could not help them in their labors.

An ant had stopped close by to arrange some cocoons.

“Can’t I help you?” asked Nipper.

The other looked at her. “Why yes,” she said after a moment, “if you are strong enough, but you have been out only a little while.”

“I feel quite strong now.”

“Then you can help arrange these, if you like.”

Nipper cheerfully set to work. At first she felt rather numb and weak, but as she moved, her strength began to come to her, and soon she was running about as briskly as any of them.

After a while Nipper noticed that there was a difference in the cocoons. Some were like the one from which she had come ; some were larger ; and others were of a brown color.

A little later, from one of the larger of these she helped to draw forth an ant quite different from herself ; one much bigger ; it was red, too, and had strong, fierce-looking jaws.

Wondering, but without saying anything, she helped in unfolding its legs, and making its toilet. It seemed quite helpless.

This new red ant sat there for a long time getting its breath and strength after its imprisonment. Even after it seemed quite itself, however, it still made no effort to stir about or help the others.

Presently Nipper, who by this time was as busy as the best of them, spoke to the red ant as she passed by. "Don't you think it's time to bestir yourself and set to work?" she asked.

The red ant stared at her but made no answer. Nipper's black friend drew her hastily away. "Hush! hush!" she whispered. "Don't you know any better than to say such a thing to her? She is one of our mistresses."

"One of our mistresses!" echoed Nipper in surprise.

Her friend looked at her pityingly. "My poor little ant," she said; "don't you know you are nothing but a slave? A little black slave?"

"No, I didn't know that?"

"Well, you are. And off beyond there, in the larger rooms, live our mistresses, all big red ants like that one. All we are here for is to wait on them, to feed them and keep their houses in order, and to take care of their young."

“But why?” cried Nipper rebelliously. “Why must we do all that?”

“Because——” began her friend; but they were interrupted by a sturdy, important-looking black ant who joined them for a moment. “What’s this?” she cried in a severe voice. “Idling in work hours? Away with you both. There is too much to be done for any such wasting of time.”

“Come,” whispered Nipper’s friend, turning away, “we must go back now, but to-night after working hours I’ll tell you all about it. And few can tell you more than I,” she added with a sigh.

All day long Nipper was hard at work with the others. The only rest was when they stopped for something to eat.

Nipper was pleased to find herself beside her friend at this hastily eaten meal, but they had no time to talk until late that evening when everything was tidy and in order, and the bands of toilers were preparing for their night’s rest.

“And now,” said Nipper eagerly, settling down beside her black friend, whose name proved to be Riddler, “now tell me how I came here, and how it is that there is so much difference between us and

the large red ants. Why should they be our mistresses, and why must we do all the work for them?"

Riddler sat silently moving her antennæ for a while, and when she spoke at last it was in a sad, low voice.

"I will tell you first how you came here," she said, "and then you will understand how it is with us, and why we never can hope to free ourselves from our slavery.

"It was about five or six weeks ago that I awoke one morning to find all the nest in an unusual stir and bustle. Slave ants were running up and down, and even our mistresses were bestirring themselves.

"I knew immediately what was going on. There was to be a slave-making expedition that day, and they were getting ready for it.

"For some time we had been short of slaves in the nest, and for that reason there had been trouble in getting the work done as it should be. Now our mistresses had made up their minds that they must supply themselves with fresh slaves.

"This could be done only by carrying off the eggs or larvæ or cocoons from the nests of black ants. You see if they carried off the black ants

who were fully grown there would be trouble about making them work in a strange place.

“What are the larvæ?” asked Nipper, for everything was still new to her.

“Well, you see, before ants are really ants they are eggs,” explained Riddler. “That is at the very first.

“These eggs are laid by the queen generally, though sometimes the others lay eggs too.

“Out of these eggs are hatched the little larvæ or grubs as they are called. These larvæ have no legs or antennæ; they are white and soft, and very helpless, and have to be fed and taken care of by the workers.



Ants feeding Larvæ

“After a time these larvæ or grubs spin cocoons, or else a little shell hardens around them, and there they lie sheltered and safe while they slowly turn into ants.

“Then when at last they make holes in the cocoon and are drawn forth they are no longer help-

less little grubs but full grown ants just as you are yourself."

"Then I was once a helpless little grub!" said Nipper wonderingly.

"Yes, and I too, and every one of the ants you see about us. But to go on," said Riddler. "The slave-catching expedition was not to start until afternoon, and it was only a short time before it was ready to go that I and a score or so of other black ants were told that we were to accompany it to carry home the cocoons that were captured.

"It was hard enough to be ordered out for such



Ants on the March

a duty I can tell you ;—to go with the red ants against ants of our own kind.

"But, after all, the red ants were not going to hurt them, and the cocoons they captured would be well taken care of.

"At any rate I knew I had no choice in the matter, so about the middle of the afternoon when

the army started I, as well as other black ants, was with it.

“ It was a long journey across rough ground, and around a piece of water, but after a while I knew by the fresh speed and excitement that scouts had brought news that we were coming near the nest we were to attack.

“ I and the other slaves were hurried on with the rest, and so I saw almost everything that happened.

“ The nest was a very large one. There must have been many more black ants in it than there were ants in our attacking party, but they knew how fierce and strong the red ants are in battle.

“ They made little or no resistance and soon hid away in the lower part of the nest. I think—I hope—that few of them were hurt, but there were some brave ones who suffered.

“ One I remember especially. She was trying to guard a narrow door into the nest. A great red ant rushed at her, and before the black ant could protect herself her head was seized in those terrible, strong, red jaws.”

Nipper shuddered with horror, and drew closer to her friend.

“ Even then,” Riddler went on, “ all might have

gone well if the black ant had kept quiet. Instead of that she struggled and tried to resist. Then in an instant those terrible jaws tightened, and when the red ant dropped her she was either dead or dying.

“She was one of the very few, however, who resisted, and the others who hid away were left unharmed. Then our mistresses broke their way into the large chambers where the larvæ and cocoons were kept.

“After that came our part in the ugly business. We were given these larvæ and cocoons to carry away with us. Soon our whole army, loaded with its helpless prisoners, was on its way home again.

“I have always had especial care of the cocoon that I myself carried, and it was from that very cocoon that you were hatched this morning.

“So now you see how it is that you came to be a slave, and why it is that we black ants are content to be only that. If a whole nest of black ants were not able to defend themselves against a small party of red ones, and that in their own country, what chance have we here in the red ants’ nest,—slaves as we have always been?

“But after all we are very happy here. We

love our work. We have a good home and plenty to eat and drink, and our mistresses are always kind to us. What more could we want?"

But Nipper made no answer. Her heart was heavy at what she had heard, and to have a good home and food seemed not enough for her. She wished for freedom, too.

NOTE. *The facts of this account of the life and battles of the *Polyergus rufescens*, or slave-making ants and their captives are taken from "The Natural History of Ants," by Pierre Huber, and "Ants, Bees, and Wasps," by Sir John Lubbock.*

Lubbock also speaks of the black ants carrying the red ones on their backs from place to place, a point used in Part II.

PART II.

It did not take long for Nipper to get used to the life of the ant hill where she lived, and a very busy life she found it.

First of all there was the house to be kept neat and in order, and this was a great labor. It was a large house with many halls and rooms.

Then there were the eggs to be cared for, and the grubs to be fed and tended. Sometimes, if it was very hot, all the grubs and cocoons had to be carried to a cooler room. Then it would turn cold and rainy and they were all carried back again.

There were other cocoons in the nest different from those of either the red or the black ants, and at first Nipper did not know what they were.

She knew later, however, when out from them were hatched little Aphides, or ant cows. These are little insects such as one often finds on the stems of rosebushes or other plants, or sometimes on roots under the ground. They are the cows of the ants.



Ants and their Cows

Nipper learned, too, how delicious was the honey, or ant-cow milk, that could be coaxed from them. Riddler taught her how to stroke their bodies gently with her feet and antennæ till the tiny drop of honey came from them just as milk does from a cow, and then how to lick it up.

The ant cows did not stay in the nest long after they hatched, however, but were driven out to pasture on some daisy leaves near by

The red ants never did any of the work. They did not even feed or clean themselves. All this was done for them by their slaves.

Nipper, being a strong, lively ant, was one of those chosen for outside work, that is, attending to the cows, or bringing in food. She worked hard, and when night came was so tired that she slept without dreams.

Still she was not happy, for she remembered that after all she was only a slave, and she thought, "I would not care how small the nest was, nor how poor the food, if I were only free."

There were two queens in the ants' nest, and Nipper often heard about them, but only three times did she see a queen in all the while she lived in the red ants' nest.

The first time she was hurrying through a long gallery and happening to take the wrong turning she found herself in a chamber that was new to her.

There, surrounded by her guards, sat a very large, handsome, solemn-looking red ant, and Nipper knew she was in the presence of the

queen. No one noticed her and she slipped quietly away.

The second time Nipper was helping one of the other outside workers to drag a dead beetle.

Coming around a bunch of grasses near the opening into the nest Nipper saw two red ants there in the doorway. One of them Nipper knew immediately to be one of the royal guard. The other was larger and finer, and Nipper recognized her as a queen.

The royal guard had hold of her and was drawing her gently but firmly down into the nest again. The queen was holding back, but she was



The Royal Guard and the Queen

not really struggling. Presently she saw the two little slave ants with the beetle and then she stopped short and looked at them. After a moment she spoke. "You are slaves, aren't you?" she asked.

The other slave stood staring at her in silence, and it was Nipper who answered at length, "Yes, your majesty," she said.

The queen ant looked at them pityingly. "And I am a queen," she said. Then she repeated, "I am a queen. Do you envy me? I am scarcely more free than you. I wished to go up into the light and to see the sky and feel the free wind, but my faithful subjects think it best that I should stay down in the nest. Some harm might happen to me."

"Would it please your majesty to come?" asked the red ant respectfully.

"Oh, yes, I will come," said the queen bitterly. "Good-by, little slaves. Perhaps it is not the hardest thing to be a slave, for you at least can come and go at your work."

Then she followed her guard down again into the gallery. The two black ants stood watching her until she was out of sight, and then Nipper said pityingly: "Poor thing! I think she looked very sad."

"Oh, yes," responded Nipper's companion, "and I really think that she is more of a slave than we. I have heard that the queens are kept as

carefully guarded as though they were prisoners. All they do is to lay eggs, and even those eggs are taken from them and given to us to take care of. The queens are not allowed to go out for fear some harm might happen to them."

"But how do you suppose the queen managed to get this far?" asked Nipper.

"Oh, she must have escaped from her guard in some way. But come! We must get on with this beetle," and the two little ants returned busily to their work.

That was the second time in her life that Nipper had seen a queen, but she was to see one a third time under circumstances that were to change the little ant's life in such a way as she had never dreamed of.

It was a warm day. So very warm that the ants were carrying all the larvæ to a cooler room.

Nipper happened somehow or other to be busy down in the nest that day.

The other ants were all so occupied that they did not notice a sound that was coming nearer and nearer;—a low, deep throbbing on the ground like the sound of many feet.

Nipper indeed heard it and paused a moment.

"What is that?" she asked of one of her comrades.

"What do you mean?"

"That sound we hear. That beating sound."

"I hear nothing," said her companion, "and if you were attending to your work you wouldn't have time to be bothering about sounds, either."

So reproved, Nipper turned to her work again, but it was with a sense of fear weighing on her.

Nearer and nearer came the sound, louder and louder. Now every one in the nest, slaves and mistresses, workers, guards, and all, could hear it.

Nearer and nearer it came, and the ants looked at each other in dismay. Louder and louder, and now suddenly it was upon them. The roofs were broken, the earth crushed down into the nest. Terrified ants ran this way and that, trying to escape. A whole drove of cattle was passing over the place where the ants' nest had been.

Even in their terror, however, the larvæ and cocoons were not forgotten. Each little slave seized one in her mouth before trying to escape from the falling nest.

Many ants, slaves and mistresses, were buried in the ruins of the nest that day.

Nipper was one of the ants who was fortunate enough to escape. Carrying a cocoon in her mouth she made her way in and out among the trampling hoofs, until at last she found herself in a place of safety at the edge of the road.

There she waited until the drove had passed, and then, still trembling with fear, she made her way back to the ruins of what had once been the beautiful and comfortable nest. Already a few stragglers were beginning to return. Nearly all of the black ants carried larvæ or cocoons in their mouths.

In and out among the gathering crowd, waving her antennæ wildly, ran one of the royal guard; the very one whom Nipper had seen drawing the queen down into the nest again.

Wildly she ran about, sometimes bumping against the other ants, sometimes running over their backs.

“Oh the queen! the queen,” she wailed. “Oh the queen! the queen!”

“Where is the queen?” asked Nipper, as the red ant ran back and forth in an aimless manner. But the red ant only repeated, “Oh the queen! the queen!”

Slave as she was, Nipper caught the red ant and held her. "Where is the queen?" she cried again.

The red ant looked at her vaguely. "Oh I don't know," she cried. "She was in the nest, but I don't know where she is now."

Without a word Nipper dropped the red ant and ran toward the opening into the ruined nest.

"Where are you going?" cried someone; but Nipper did not stop to answer. Somewhere down in the nest she had no doubt the poor red queen was still lying, deserted by all, and perhaps crushed under some fallen earth.

Along one passage after another went the brave Nipper. Sometimes the way was so blocked with fallen earth that she had to stop to make her way through it. Sometimes she had to go back and find her way around by another passage.

At last beyond a heap of fallen earth she thought she heard a faint moan. "Your majesty, is that you?" cried Nipper.

There was no answer, only after a while another moan, fainter than before.

Now Nipper flew like a little tiger at the earth that blocked her way. With teeth and legs she worked at it until she made an opening.

Through this opening she slipped and found herself in one of the royal rooms, and there before her in a sad plight lay the very queen for whom she was searching. In sad plight indeed, for a lump of earth had fallen on her, pinning her down so that she could not move.



Nipper Rescuing the Queen.

Close by lay one of the royal guards crushed by the fallen roof. Nipper saw in a moment that the guard was quite dead. Then she set to work to release the queen.

This was hard work for the little ant, tired as she already was. But she went at the task bravely, and soon had the joy of finding that the queen was free. But her labors were not yet ended. The queen was not able to walk, and so Nipper took her upon her back. Staggering under the weight, she made her way past the heaps of earth and back to the mouth of the nest.

On and on she went, up and down until it seemed as though she never would reach the end of her journey. Then suddenly she saw the light before her, and a moment after she was out in the road again and among the frightened groups of ants.

What joy arose when they saw Nipper come staggering out with the rescued queen upon her back ! Immediately the two were surrounded by a joyous crowd. The queen was lifted from Nipper's back, food was given her and she was gently stroked and rubbed.

When, at last the queen seemed herself again, those around her turned to the faithful Nipper. " And you, little ant ; what reward can we give to you ? " they asked.

At that one said one thing and one another, until they saw that the queen wished to speak. Then all were silent.

The queen raised herself and looked around. " My faithful subjects," she said, " although to-day you have me with you again, a little while ago I was lying prisoned among the ruins, and there I would be still if it were not for this faithful little ant. I now propose that as a reward for this service we

give her the thing that is sweetest to everyone. Let her have her freedom."

"Her freedom! Her freedom!" shouted all the ants, both red and black. "Let Nipper be free!"

But Nipper looked around at them sadly.

"Alas, what good would my freedom do me?" she asked. "I would be alone, and where could I go? I know no other nest than this?"

"You shall have companions to go with you," cried the ants. "Choose what slaves you will and we will free them too. They shall go with you and you can make yourselves a nest of your own."

Then Nipper looked about her and chose a dozen black ants to go with her as her helpers. Among them, you may be sure, was the old ant who had carried her when she was a cocoon, and the one whom she had helped with the dead beetle.

The red ants also gave Nipper some cocoons and some ant larvae, that from one of them she might raise a black queen to reign over the new nest.

So, carrying these cocoons and larvae carefully in their mouths, the little band of black ants set out, followed by the good wishes of those they left behind.

A short time afterward, not far from the red ants' nest, which was now rebuilt, might have been seen a large colony of black ants.

They lived there at peace with their red neighbors, and however fiercely the red ants set out on their slave-making expeditions that black colony was never harmed or disturbed. It was the colony started by the gallant Nipper and her little band of faithful followers.

THE TAME BAT

ALMOST every child is afraid of bats,—they flit about so strangely and so silently through the night. Sometimes they flit so close that one feels the air from their leathery wings, but they never seem to touch anything.

If you catch and examine a bat, you can see what a cunning little creature it is. Its head is like that of a tiny fox, with eyes like shining black beads. Its teeth are small and white. Its body is covered with fur as soft as silk, and its tiny hind feet are beautifully finished off with little nails.

Even its leathery wings are as fine and lustrous as satin.

One evening a bat had flown into a room. It whirled about here and there so silently and so swiftly that the eye could not follow it.

The girls who were in the room were frightened and covered their heads. They had heard that bats sometimes catch their claws and wings in the hair, and get so tangled up in it that it has to be cut off. Many people believe this, although no one has ever really seen it happen,

The brother of the girls had heard of this too, but his hair was too short for him to feel afraid of its happening to him. He took a tennis racket and stood waiting for the bat to come near him. When it did, he struck at it.

He was sure he had hit it, because he had felt its body against the wood of the racket, and it had given a squeak. He thought he had knocked it across the room. But though he looked and hunted he could not find it.

At last he said that he must have struck it without hurting it and it had probably gone out into the night again. Then the girls uncovered their heads and went on with their reading.

The afternoon of the next day the housemaid was cleaning that same room. She lifted the por-
L. of C.

tière to shake it, and then dropped it and jumped away with a shriek.

“What’s the matter?” asked the boy, who was passing through the room with his cap on and the racket in his hand.”

“Och, and I think it was a mouse,” said the housemaid.

“A mouse!” cried the boy, full of interest in a moment, and he too lifted the portière.

There in a corner of the door was the poor little bat that he had struck the night before. He had broken its wing with his racket, and it had been hiding about the room ever since.



The Tame Bat

The housemaid begged him to kill the “nasty thing,” as she called it. But the boy said he wanted to see what it would do.

The little thing was almost blinded by the light, but it opened its mouth and threatened him with its tiny teeth. Then it hobbled a little farther away, trying to use its broken wing.

“It must be hungry,” said the boy. “Don’t you touch it, Mary, I’m going to get something and see if it will eat.”

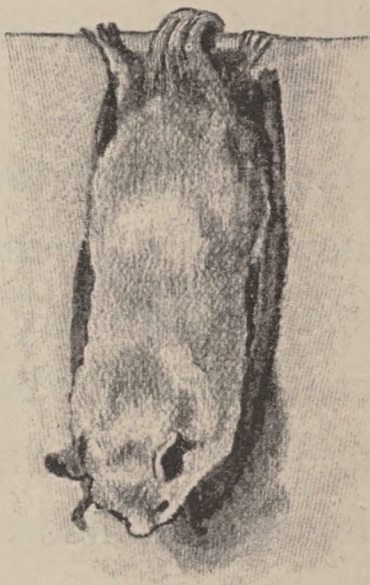
“ Indeed I wouldn’t touch it for anything ! ” cried Mary. “ I’m afraid of the horrid thing.”

The boy ran away and presently came back with some tiny bits of raw meat.

The poor little bat must have been almost starved, for it ate greedily. When it seemed to have had enough, and would eat no more, the boy got a saucer of water and put it down before it, and the bat lapped up the water thirstily, using its tongue just as a dog would.

The boy said he was going to keep the bat for a pet and see if he could tame it. He took a starch box and covered the front of it with mosquito netting. He put a perch across it very much like the perch in the bird-cage so that the bat could hang itself up, for that is what bats like to do. They hang themselves up by their little hind feet, with their heads down and their wings folded about them, and so they will sleep all day.

The little bat, Flitters, as the boy named it, seemed quite satisfied with this new home when it



The Tame Bat

was put in a dark place, and promptly hung itself up and went to sleep.

The sisters of the boy were disgusted. They said that if he wanted a pet he might get something better than a horrid bat. They were afraid it might get out and crawl about the room, too. But, in spite of all they said, the boy kept the bat and set himself to taming it.

He fed it every evening. When he brought the food he always called to the bat with a peculiar whistle. Soon the bat knew this whistle and would answer him when he called.

After awhile Flitters grew so tame that its master let it out of the box. It would come when he called it, even in the daytime, though then it moved very slowly and uncertainly. It was hard for it to see in the light.

After nightfall it would grow more lively.

All the family, even the girls, became used to Flitters after a time. They never could understand, though, how the boy could bear to handle the bat as he did, or to let it creep up his sleeve or hide in his pockets. Sometimes the bat would hang itself from his open hand, hooking its little feet over the skin between his fingers.

The boy's friends, lads like himself, were very much interested in the bat and liked to feed it and handle it. Sometimes they gave it flies and small insects, sometimes fresh meat.

Very few of the ladies who came to the house liked Flitters, however. They seemed to be afraid of the little bat.

One day a friend of the boy's mother came to the house. She had called for a roll of papers that had been promised her. No one being at home, she told the maid she would look in the library and see if it were there.

On the table lay a loose roll. "This must be the one," said the lady. "I'll just see." She picked it up and as she did so out slid Flitters, falling upon the table. The bat had been taking a quiet nap inside the tube of papers where it was dark.

The lady screamed, she was so frightened, and when the housemaid told her it was only a tame bat she seemed quite angry that anyone should have such a pet. She did not know how cunning Flitters could be.

The place Flitters liked best in the daytime was the cloak closet. It was dark and still there, and the bat found many fine places in which to nestle.

But after the girls had found it cuddled away in their hats or coat-sleeves several times they were careful to keep the door shut so that it could not get in.

This was after Flitters' wing had begun to heal, and it could flutter about a little. The wing healed very quickly. The bone knit together and after a while it was quite well, only a lump was left where the bone had grown together.

When the bat was well and had begun to fly about, you could seldom tell where it was. It would generally come, however, when the boy called it. It would fly circling about the room as it grew dusk, close to the walls or ceiling. It would catch the mosquitoes and other insects that it saw there.

Then the bat began to go out of doors and they saw very little of it. Even when the boy called it, it seldom came.

One day a little girl had come out from the city with her mother, to spend the night at the boy's home. The children were sitting on the piazza after supper and two or three bats flitted past.

The little girl looked up and said,

“Bat, bat,
Come under my hat
And I'll give you a piece of bacon.”

“Wouldn't it be just like a magician,” said the boy, “if I could call a bat and make it come to me?”

“Yes, it would,” said the little girl, “but you couldn't do it.” She had not been told about the pet bat.

“Couldn't I?” said the boy. “We'll see.”

He gave the peculiar whistle that he always gave for Flitters. There was no answer.

Again he whistled, and then one of the bats flew in under the porch.

He whistled a third time and the bat circled about his head and finally lighted upon his shoulder, folding its wings into the likeness of ungainly front legs.

The little girl could not wonder enough. She felt as though the boy were really a magician, and was even a little afraid of him.

The boy took the bat in his hand and smoothed and tickled it. Then he let it fly away, and after a while he told her and her mother that it was his pet bat, and all about it.

That was almost the last time he ever saw it, however. Either it was not with the bats which he saw flitting about on other evenings, or it did

not care to answer to his call. No doubt the little fellow preferred to flit through the air with creatures of its own kind to living in a house, and being made a pet of.

THE CAPTIVE ROBIN

I WAS hatched in the top of a tall maple tree.

The nest where I lived with my little brothers and sisters was very soft and warm. Still softer and warmer was my mother's breast as she brooded over us.

My father was a very handsome robin, as I remember him.



Father Robin Feeding the Children

He was a good father to us. There were always worms enough to fill our hungry beaks.

And how happy

we were up there in our nest among the leaves!

Sometimes the wind blew so hard that the tree where we lived would bend far over. Then across the side of the nest we could catch sight of a red

brick house with tall chimneys—of a lawn, and of a shining river with hills beyond.

Then the wind would pass by, the tree would straighten, and we could see nothing above the circle of the nest but the green leaves with the sun shining through them.

Every evening our father sat on the tiptop of a tall tree just as the sun was setting. He looked quite black against the pale sky. There he sang and sang ;—sang so sweetly and clearly that all we young ones were still and listened. Then home he would come, to sleep on a branch close by, while our mother brooded over us. Ah, those were happy days ; but they could not last.

We were all strong, stout robins. We grew fast. Soon our mother told us that it was time for us to learn to fly. That was not pleasant—that learning to fly.

We got up on the edge of the nest. There we sat, afraid to try. We were very, very high up in the air, and our wings felt strange when we spread them.

Flutter and Flap were very bold and strong. They tried without much urging. The rest of us were more timid.

I am ashamed to say I was so timid and fearful about it that at last my mother had to go back of me and push me off the nest. Then down I

went fluttering and struggling.

“Spread your wings,” cried my parents circling about me. “Beat the air. Fly! Fly!”

But down, down I went into the long grass. My brothers and sisters had guided themselves to trees that were lower than our



Robin in Danger

maple. There they sat balancing themselves among the leaves.

“Now it will be harder for you,” said my mother. “It is harder to lift yourself out from the grass. You had better just flutter along to those bushes yonder before you try another flight.”

Suddenly my father gave a cry of alarm.

"Wait a moment ; something is the matter," said my mother, rising to join him.

I was left there alone in the long grass.

Both my parents began shrieking. Their cries were of terror and anger. They shot past above me like arrows, seeming to aim themselves at a place in the grasses near by. And now I heard something stirring and a soft breathing just back of me.

I glanced fearfully around. There, glaring at me through the grasses, were two great yellow eyes set in a furry head, and back of this head a great dark body.

I did not know what it was, but still I felt so terrified that my heart seemed to stop beating. Then with a bound the creature was upon me. I felt its teeth. It lifted me and carried me in its mouth. It was a cat.

My parents circled above us with pitiful cries, but they could not help me.

I do not remember anything clearly for a while after that. It is all dim as in a dream.

When I looked about me again I found I was lying on some soft sand. Above me and on each side were iron wires. I was in a cage.

From what I learned afterwards my mistress must have seen the cat carrying me, and saved me from its teeth. She had saved me, but I was a prisoner.

My mistress was very good and gentle with me. Soon I learned to know her and not to be afraid of her when she came near me. She fed me, she gave me fresh water, and cleaned my cage every day. Every day, too, she put a china dish filled with water into my cage. In that I bathed. First I would light upon the edge of the dish and dip my bill in the water, fluttering my wings. Then down I would hop, splash! into the water. I would dip down and beat my wings so fast that the water would fly round in a perfect shower. When I got through, all the cage would be wet. The drops would hang from the wires.

It made my mistress laugh. Then she would wipe the cage dry while I preened my feathers and rustled them into place.

Our room was at the very top of the house. My mistress did the sewing for the household. She was not one of the family.

Sometimes a little boy and girl came up to the room to look at me. They called my mistress

Sally. She called them Miss May and Master Donald.

One day Master Donald brought a hairy terrier into the room with him. It barked at me and frightened me so I beat myself against the bars. My mistress made him take it out. At first he would not, but she told him that this was her room and her bird and that she would not have me frightened. Then he was angry, too, and he did not come any more.

One day, after my mistress had cleaned my cage, she fastened back the door and so left the cage open. I thought she had forgotten. I flew down and looked out. Then I hopped outside.

She did not try to stop me. She was sitting close by with some sewing. She laid her sewing down and watched me.

I looked all about me, putting my head first on one side and then on the other.

How strange it seemed to be outside the bars! I could see from the window the sky and the tree tops. That was where I belonged.

I spread my wings and fluttered toward the light outside. But at the window I struck against something. I saw nothing, but something was

there, hard and cold, between me and the freedom outside. It was the window glass.

I beat myself against it until my mistress caught me in her hands and put me back in my cage. But after that she let me out of my cage every day to fly about the room awhile.

Sometimes I used to light on the back of my mistress' rocking-chair. It was great fun swinging backward and forward as she rocked.

Sometimes I went to her workbasket and pecked at the things in it. There were little red things that looked like strawberries, and flat cases, and long pins with shiny, black heads. There were spools, too, with thread wound around them. Once I took the end of a thread in my beak and pulled. I pulled it as far as I could, and then I tried to fly away with it. There didn't seem to be any end to it, however. My mistress took the thread from me and wound it all up again, and tapped me with her thimble.

Back of the looking-glass on the bureau lived another robin. He was a handsome bird. He lived in a room exactly like the one I lived in, only everything was turned the other way.

We used to look at each other. Every time I

moved he moved, too. I used to call to him, but he never answered me. There was glass between us and we could not reach each other.

Sometimes when I sat on the red pincushion and pulled the pins out, I would look up and see that *he* had been pulling pins out of *his* red pincushion in that other room. He always pulled out just as many pins as I did.



Robin in Mischief

He was a funny bird. I never grew tired of watching him through the glass, but I never got to know him very well.

One day, while I was amusing myself on the bureau, my mistress left the room. She closed the door behind her, but I suppose she did not latch it.

Suddenly I saw the door in that other looking-glass room open. In through the crack looked two fierce, yellow eyes. A terrible, lank, black cat came stealing in. It looked about the room. The looking-glass robin did not seem to see it. He

was watching the door of *my* room. I tried to call to him, but I could not. I felt as frightened as though the cat were after me.

Then I knew that the cat saw him. Stealthily it crept nearer. Would he never turn and see it?

Suddenly some faint sound made me look behind me. There was a cat in my room, and it was at me—at *me*—that it glared.

I sat quite still. I tried to shriek, but my voice died away in a pitiful peep. The door opened and my mistress came in. Miss May was just back of her.

“Oh, the cat!” shrieked my mistress. “He is after my robin.” She ran at the cat to drive it from the room.

“Don’t you dare to hurt my cat,” screamed Miss May.

The charm the cat had thrown over me was broken. I flew wildly to the window, beating myself against the glass. All was confusion.

At last the cat was turned out. Miss May followed it saying that the cat should not be treated so, and that her mamma didn’t like having that nasty bird kept there at any rate.

Then my mistress took me in her hands and

kissed me. After that she put me back in my cage. And now I was no longer allowed to fly about the room except when my mistress was there.

Outside the window a stout nail had been driven in the wall. There my cage sometimes was hung, high, high up in the air. How sweet the air was! How the wind blew through the trees near by!

One day a robin lighted on a branch of one of the neighboring trees. He sang and sang. He sang even more sweetly than my father had sung from the top of the poplar tree, and I listened.



Robin Singing

The next day he came again, and the next and next.

Once he flew over and alighted on my cage.

“Who are you?” he asked.

"I am a captive robin," I said.

He stayed and talked to me awhile and then he flew away. I felt very sad.

But he came again. Every day we talked together. I told him my story. I asked him if he could tell me anything of my father and mother, or of my little brothers and sisters, but he could not. I never knew what became of them.

I did not care now for that other robin in the looking-glass room. I did not care to sit on the back of my mistress' chair. When she let me out I flew to the window and sat looking out and longing to be free.

"Are you sick, my little robin?" asked my mistress. But I could not tell her.

One day my robin friend came to my cage. "If you were only free," he said, "you should be my mate."

Then he told me how, before very long, he must fly away. The winter was coming. That was why the sky shone so and the leaves turned red. Very soon the leaves would fall. Then he must go.

Now indeed I was sad. I pined to be free;—to use my wings in the sky instead of in that cramped little room with its one window.

My mistress bent above my cage one day. "My poor little, dear little Robin," she said. "You were happy enough at first, but now if you wish to go it is cruel to keep you here."

She reached into the cage and caught me. She pressed her lips against me. Then she opened her hand.

I did not go to her chair or the bureau. I flew to the window to look out.

A soft cool air was blowing in from outside. It stirred the curtain. I hopped upon the window sill. No glass was there.



Robin on the Nest

I spread my wings; then away and away I flew, dipping and rising in my flight. I was free.

This spring we came back from the South, my mate and I. We came back to the house where my mistress looks from her little attic window.

Our nest is built in a tree close by. As I sit on my nest I can see the window of her room.

Once I flew on to the well-known window sill. My mistress was sitting inside.

“Oh, are you *my* robin?” she cried.

She put down her sewing and came toward me. She put out her hand, but I would not let her catch me. I spread my wings and flew back to my babies in the nest.

Every morning my dear mate sits on a branch near the window and sings and sings for my mistress. I hope she hears him, for his song is very sweet.

FLORA AND HER CAT

FLORA was not a little girl. She was a lioness. She had never seen the great deserts nor the wild, tangled jungles that her mother had known, for Flora was born at the Zoölogical Gardens. She was the first little lioness that had ever been born there, and the keepers of the animals made a great pet of her. She was not kept shut up in a cage, but was allowed to go free like a pet cat or dog.

Flora herself had a pet. This pet was a cat that had been brought to the Zoo to catch the mice that were there.

Flora grew so fond of this cat that she never was happy when it was out of her sight. She carried it about with her, holding it by the nape of its neck as a cat does its kitten. If it tried to run away she caught it by the tip of its tail and pulled it back.

When she slept, she curled herself up around it so that it could not get away.

One day Flora was sleeping very soundly. She slept so soundly that she was not aroused when the cat awoke from its nap, and stepping stealthily over those great yellow paws went outside to take a stroll.

Some time later Flora, too, awoke. Her cat was gone. She looked around. There were a number of wild rabbits at the Zoo. Just then one of them ran past the door.

Flora caught sight of it. It was going very fast. She thought it was her cat running away from her. Off she set in hot chase after bunny. People screamed and ran as they saw Flora bounding across the grounds.

Just as she was about to catch the rabbit it ran down into its burrow. Flora snuffed and whined at the hole in the ground.

A moment later, she saw her cat walking placidly across the grass. It really was her cat this time.

Flora bounded after it, picked it up gently, and carried it back with her. Then laying it down between her paws she began to lick it with her rough tongue, purring with delight. She had a wonderful purr, it was so loud and deep.

As Flora grew larger the keepers were obliged to shut her up in a cage. It frightened the people who came to the Zoo to see a great creature like that at liberty.

Flora seemed unhappy at first, but she soon grew used to the cage, and was as contented as ever, for she was allowed to have her cat with her.

Though the lioness was almost always gentle with her pet, she used to tease it at times. One thing she did was to walk up and down the cage just back of the cat, putting one or the other of her front paws on the tip of its tail. Puss would grow so angry that it would turn round and spit and scratch at the lioness. The lioness would stand perfectly still with her head turned away, until puss started off again. Then she would follow it again placing her paws on the tip of its tail with the greatest exactness.

The cat, in its turn, would play with Flora's tail as the lioness lay waving the end of it gently to and fro. Puss would crouch down, its eyes gleaming as they were fixed upon that moving tip. Then the cat's body would begin to sway from side to side, and suddenly it would bound upon the tail, hold-



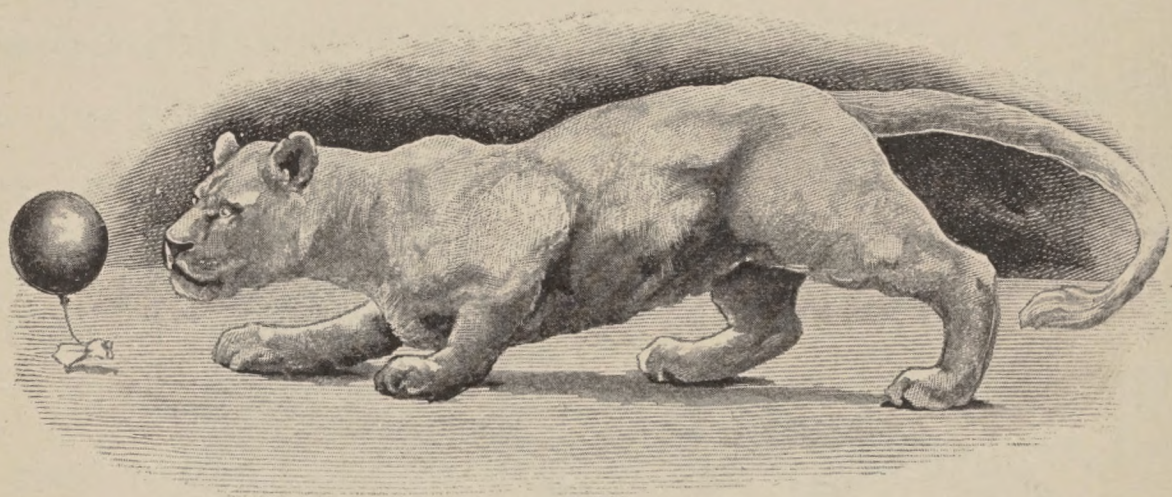
Flora and her Cat

ing it with all four paws, rolling over and over, and biting as hard as it could.

The lioness would look around lazily at the cat and try to wave the tail free. Sometimes the cat would bite too hard, and then Flora would simply lay one of those great, heavy paws on it, and pin

it down so that it was unable to move until the lioness chose to release it.

One day Flora had a new plaything. It even charmed her away from the cat for a few minutes. A man who was visiting the Zoo put a toy balloon



Flora and the Balloon

into her cage. It was weighted down with a piece of paper tied to a string, so that it only floated a few inches above the ground.

Flora was lying with her cat between her paws when the balloon was put into her cage. She looked at it for a moment or so. Then she rose and walked over toward it with half-sleepy curiosity. She smelled it and then touched it with her paw.

Away went the balloon, to Flora's surprise. She followed it and touched it again. Away it floated.

Flora now began to look more wide awake. She hurried after it and this time gave it a good, rousing stroke with her mighty paw. Instead of being hurt, the balloon bounded away as lightly as a feather.

And now began a wild chase after the balloon. Up and down and around the cage after it went the lioness. At last she got it in a corner and struck her paw down upon it. The balloon broke with a loud report. Flora bounded as though she had been shot, and retreated to the furthest corner of the cage.

There she crouched for some time before she gathered courage to go over and examine the little, wrinkled piece of rubber which was all that was left of the balloon. After that Flora contented herself with her cat for a plaything.

But a sad thing happened. The cat was killed by a mowing-machine one day when it was out for a stroll. Flora soon began to be very uneasy. As time went on and the cat did not return, she grew more and more anxious, pacing up and down her cage with her head up and her tail waving.

Now and then she would stop and give a roar, looking anxiously up or down the building to see

if the cat was coming in answer to her call. Then she would pace up and down and stop to roar again.

The next day her keeper, seeing how distressed she was, and knowing that her pet had been killed, thought that he would introduce another cat into the cage in place of the lost one.

He went all the way home and brought back a house cat with him. He put it into Flora's cage. The moment the lioness saw it she hurried over toward it with the greatest delight ; but the cat was frightened, and jumped out of the cage.

It was put back in such a way that it could not escape. Flora again went over to it, snuffed at it, and then with a low growl struck it such a blow that the cat was killed instantly.

They tried another cat, but she killed that too.

Then the keeper decided she must get over her loneliness as best she could by herself. It was a long time before Flora seemed quite happy again, and she never had another pet.

THE TWO WORLDS

Down in the brook is a wonderful water world,—a world that is separated from the world of air above by what is called the *surface film*.

This surface film is thinner than anything you can think of. It is all over the water like a sheet of fairy glass.

You cannot see the surface film, and you cannot feel it, but it is there, all the same.

It is easy enough to break it. Drop a stone in the brook or stir the water with your finger, and the surface film is broken and mixes with the other water. Immediately, however, another surface film forms to take its place. There it is again, like fairy glass between that world and this. So the two worlds are always apart.

There are some things, however, that can go backward and forward from one world to the other,—from the world of air to the world of water and then back again, as though they were magicians.

That is what the whirligig beetles can do. Sometimes they go whirling and speeding about on the surface film, as though they were skating, and it bends under them like thin ice. Sometimes

they take a drop of air and swim down in the water. There they walk about over the stones or through the water-weed forests.

What wonderful things they see there: little soft, brown lizards creeping about; crayfish, with pop eyes and long feelers; fishes flitting through the water, like birds through air; and herds of snails feeding on the dead weeds or refuse.

Sometimes the whirligig beetles climb up a reed or piece of grass and so out of the water. They stop to rest a few minutes, and then they spread their wings and fly away, but they never fly far. Soon they come back again.

A dingy larva was clinging, with its six legs, to a piece of water weed down in the water. It looked up at the beetles as they skated about.

"How strange!" it sighed. "They can fly about all day in that beautiful upper world if they choose, and yet they always come back to the water. If I could only fly, how happy I would be! I would never come back."

Close by there was another larva. It was different from the first. It was mouse-colored, and almost transparent, except for the spine down its back. It was busily eating a water-snail. It held

the snail in two of its claws, somewhat as a squirrel might hold a nut ; then it caught the snail in its jaws and pulled it out of the shell and ate it.

Some day the mouse-colored larva would change into a goat beetle, but neither of the larvæ knew that.

Now it dropped an empty snail shell and looked over at its companion.

“ Well I don’t know,” it said, in answer to the first one’s remark. “ I’m thinking of going out into the upper world myself soon. I’m not feeling particularly delighted about it though. There are worse places than this pond I can tell you.”

“ Perhaps, perhaps,” said the first ; “ but, oh ! I should like it up there, I know.”

The next day the mouse-colored larva left the pond. It climbed over the pebbles and out upon the bank of the brook.

The dun-colored larva looked after it longingly. “ Yes, there it goes,” it sighed. “ If I could only follow ! But I know I should die up there.”

It felt very sad as it clung to the water weeds, or moved slowly and sluggishly about through the fairy forests below.

It was about a month afterward that the mouse-

colored larva came back to the brook again. You would not have known it if you had seen it, for it was no longer a larva. It had changed to a fine, large beetle.

It swam about for awhile with the whirligig beetles on top of the water. Then suddenly it broke through the surface film and dived down to the water weeds below. The dun-colored larva was still feeding there. It did not know the beetle as its old friend, the mouse-colored larva, in a new form.

"So, here you are still," said the beetle. "I was just wondering about you, and I thought I'd come down and see if you were here."

"Wondering about me!" said the larva. "How could you wonder about *me*? You never saw me before."

"Never saw you before!" cried the beetle. "Well, that's a good joke. Though to be sure I have changed since you saw me," and it swelled itself with pride. "I'm that mouse-colored larva that used to live down here and eat snails."

The larva could hardly believe it.

"This was the way of it," said the beetle. "You remember the day I left here?"

Yes, the larva remembered.

Then the beetle went on to say how all that day it had been longing to get out of the water. But even when it went at last, climbing up the bank and into the air, it was not comfortable. It wanted to get in the dark and sleep, so it burrowed down into the damp earth beside the brook. There it curled up and slept.

When it awoke, it felt as though its skin were too tight for it. "Ugh! but that was a horrid feeling," said the beetle. "I wouldn't like to feel it again."

However it stretched and stretched itself, and presently, crack! its skin split right open. Then it crawled out of its skin, but it felt very weak and strange.

It stayed down in the dark there for quite a while until it was strong again. When it crawled out, behold, it was a fine, big beetle!

"Why, I can fly about now wherever I like," said the beetle, "but I don't care about it. I'd rather be down in the water. That upper world they talk about is rather a poor place in my opinion."

But the larva began to pant with eagerness. "So you changed!" it cried. "You changed into a beetle. Oh, do you—*do* you suppose, that if I

climbed up and dug into the ground I would change into a beetle, too? Could I, also, fly about in the upper world?"

The beetle shook its head. "I wouldn't advise you to try," he said, "it isn't every one who can do as I have done."

"Oh, but I wouldn't be afraid to try," cried the larva. "I *must* try. I would go through anything to have wings and be able to fly like you."

And now, in spite of all that the beetle could say, the larva began to climb up toward the surface of the water. It climbed slowly, and the beetle followed it.

When it reached the edge of the brook the beetle asked with much interest, "Where do you think you'll burrow?"

"I don't know. I don't think I'll burrow at all," said the larva. "Somehow, I don't feel like burrowing."

"You don't!" cried the beetle. "Why, how do you expect to turn into a beetle if you don't burrow?"

"I don't know, but I don't think I'll burrow. I think I'll just cling here to this plant and rest awhile."

The larva fastened itself to the plant, and the beetle sat down beside it to talk. The beetle liked to talk. It told the larva all over again about how it had burrowed down into the earth and burst its skin.

The larva said very little. It seemed to feel dull.

“Why, how curious you do look,” cried the beetle suddenly. “How your eyes shine! They’re every color,—blue and green and red. And, oh dear! I do believe you’re beginning to split. How do you feel?”

But the larva said nothing. It, too, knew that something wonderful was happening to it. It was swelling itself with violent motions. The split in its back was lengthening.



Dragonfly coming out of Larva

It was still clinging to the reed with its hooked feet. With a violent effort it drew its upper part back, and out of the shell. Then it rested perfectly quiet.

“Dead,” said the beetle, after watching it for some time and seeing no motion. But the other

was not dead. It was only recovering its strength.

The beetle went away after a while, but the changed larva still hung there silent and motionless. After a time it slowly drew the rest of its body out of the dried shell, and crawled farther up the reed.



The Dragonfly

It was a beautiful dragonfly. Its wings were clear, but strengthened with delicate veins. Its eyes shone with all the colors of the rainbow.

It still sat on the reed for some time, get-

ting stronger and stronger with every passing moment.

The beetle, who had come back, stared with surprise.

“Why, is that you?” he asked.

“Yes, it is I.”

The beetle stirred its wings in surprise.

“And now what are you going to do?” it asked.

“What am I going to do? Why, fly about in the beautiful air,—learn all the ways of this new wonder world,—flit faster than the butterfly, lighter than the bird.”

“And when will you be coming down into the water world again?”

“Never ; I am free from all that now. Good-by, beetle. Good-by and forever.”

The beetle stared after the glittering dragonfly as it dashed away, swift as an arrow, through the clear air.

“Well I never !” it said. “At any rate it’s just as I said. He didn’t turn into a beetle after all.”

Then the beetle went back to the pond and began playing with the whirligigs.

THE PARTRIDGES

ONE day Mr. Rollins came home from the field, carrying his hat very carefully in his hands.

"Laura, come here," he called to his little daughter, "I have something for you."

He set his hat softly down on the edge of the porch, and when the little girl looked in it she saw eight pear-shaped, yellowish eggs.

"What are they?" she asked. "Where did you get them?"

"They are partridge eggs. I found them down in the field near the wood. Would you like to have them?"

"Yes. But what shall I do with them?"

"Feel them. They're still warm. How would you like to put them under old Dorcas, the hen, and raise a brood of little partridges?"

"Oh yes, I'd like to do that. And will the little partridges be really mine?"

"Yes, they shall all belong to you, and nobody else. Come now and we'll see what Dorcas says to the eggs."

The eggs were carried to the chicken house,

and there Mr. Rollins put them in among Dorcas's own white ones.

The old hen looked at them curiously when they were placed in her nest, but she made no objections, settling down again as soon as she was left alone, and cuddling all the eggs alike under her soft, warm feathers.

After a while the eggs hatched out,—the hen's eggs and partridge's eggs at almost the same time.

The little partridges were brisker and less helpless than the chickens. Old Dorcas looked at them with pride. Still, she made no distinction, scratching and clucking for all alike, and the little partridges themselves seemed to know no difference. They ran about with their little foster brothers and sisters perfectly content, and at night they were all sheltered together under the hen's broad wings.

Laura was very proud of her little partridges. The visitors who came were always invited out to the chicken yard to see the little things. Laura liked to feed them herself. She liked to see them pushing softly against each other in their eagerness to get the corn meal she gave them, and she liked to hear their eager pipings.

One day Dorcas wandered down into the field

that bordered the wood. Her brood was with her, and now and then she stopped and scratched, calling to them to come and get what she had found. The little chickens and partridges followed her through the sunny grass, peeping softly.

Presently Laura came down to the field to drive them home.

She was quite close to them when suddenly from the shadow of the wood sounded the call of a partridge. The little ones raised their heads and listened. Again it sounded, and then swiftly and silently as tiny shadows all the little partridges ran into the woods, slipping in among the bushes and undergrowth, and so were lost to sight.

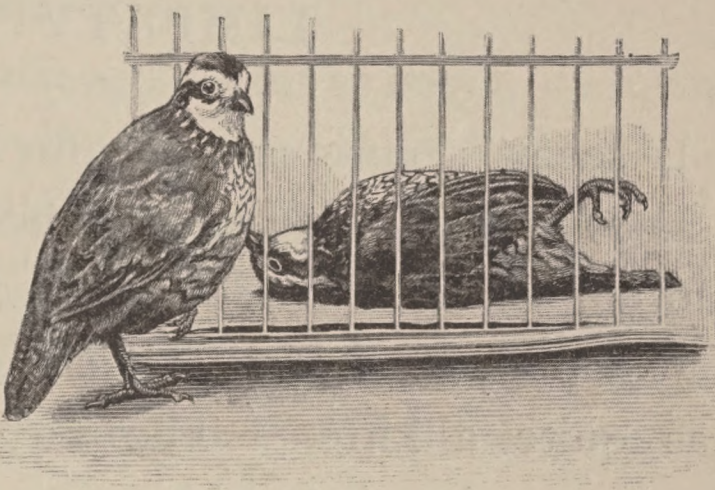
Laura hunted about for them, and called them, and old Dorcas clucked loudly to them to come back, but they were gone and the little girl thought she would never see them again.

Some months after the partridges disappeared, Laura and her mother were sitting on the porch, when, with a loud whirr, something flew past them and against the window so hard that a pane of glass was splintered. They heard a thud of something falling in the room beyond. Laura's mother put down her sewing and hurried into the house.

On the mantel a full-grown partridge was crouching. It must have been frightened indeed to have flown in through the window like that. Perhaps a fox or a hawk had been after it. It was badly cut by the broken glass.

They took the wounded partridge and put it in a cage. They set the cage out on the porch in the shadow of the vines.

The next day they heard another partridge whistling to it. It was the wounded one's mate. All day it called from some hiding-place among the bushes.



The two Partridges

The wounded one answered the call, but its answers grew fainter and

fainter. They gave it food and water, but it had been so badly cut that when they came to look at it the next morning, it was dead. Another partridge was on the porch close to the cage. When they came out it flew away. It must have been the mate that had been calling the day before.

Laura said she was sure that the dead partridge was one of the little ones that Dorcas had hatched, and that when it found itself in danger it had remembered them, and had come back to them for help.

She buried it in a box under the rosebushes and put up a headstone. "That's so its mate will know where to find it," she said, but the mate never came to look.

LIMPETY

It seems a curious name for a cat,—Limpety; I suppose they called me that because I was lame and limped.

It happened—my getting lame I mean—when I was quite a kitten. The way of it was that I caught my foot in a rabbit trap when I was crossing a field. Oh, how scared I was when I found myself caught, and how I mewed and mewed!

After a while I heard some people coming,—boys, and they had dogs with them. Then I tore my foot loose and ran as fast as I could through the tall grass, and so on into a thick wood. There I climbed a tree.

The boys and dogs were after me. I could hear them, but I crossed to another tree on a grapevine and hid in a hollow.

I could hear them below me, the boys talking and the dogs sniffing round, while I lay there trembling, afraid to mew.

After a while they went away.

When I was sure they had quite gone, I climbed down and went on my way, though my foot hurt me dreadfully. It got well after a while, but I have limped ever since.

But that is not where I meant to begin. I meant to begin at the very beginning, when I was a tiny kitten with my eyes not yet open.

I was born in a barn. My mother was a barn cat, thin and ragged and wild of eye. She was not a pretty cat, though she was a kind enough mother to us.

There were five of us kittens, and I suppose we were not pretty either; that is, none of us but Whitey. She was a plump, gentle, soft, little thing. The rest of us were lean and haggard enough, even as kittens.

We lived in a hollow of hay, high up in the hay-mow. It was a pleasant place, soft and dark,

with swallows darting in and out overhead, and the sound of the horses and chickens coming up to us from the stable beneath.

I don't suppose our mother found it as comfortable a home as we did. She must have been hungry often, for, though there were plenty of mice and rats in the barn, there were several cats there, too. Our mother was no longer young at that time, and often and often she would come back to the nest not having caught a mouse all day, because some younger cat had been quicker than she in pouncing on the prey.

However, we were young and thoughtless, and that never troubled us. We lived there happily enough, for awhile, as I say. Then one day, just as we were getting big enough to think of mousing for ourselves, the farmer happened to come climbing over the mow. Out of our nest we jumped in haste and ran away, some one way and some another.

"By George!" cried the farmer. "Another lot of kittens. This is getting to be too much. Here, Tom, I wish you'd get a bag and catch these kittens and carry them off."

"Yes sir," said Tom, "I'll do it."

Presently he came up a ladder from the stable below carrying an empty potato sack in his hand. We were all hiding in different places. From back of a beam where I was crouching I could see Whitey cowering in one corner.

She was the first one caught. She did not struggle, but only mewed dismally after she was shut in the bag.

Mouser followed.

I was the next one caught. I made a hard fight for it, too. We were all, except Whitey, as fierce and untamed as any wild animals.

When the man caught me I did not mew, but I turned on him tooth and nail, and bit into his finger till my teeth touched the bone.

He swore, and tossed me from him into the bag so hard that I was almost stunned for awhile. And there I was. Fighting or biting would do no good there.

In a little while my other brothers were forced into the sack one after another, and the mouth of the bag securely tied. After that we were left lying there for some time.

We mewed aloud and called our mother, but there was no answer.

After awhile we felt the bag being lifted from the ground with us in it, and we were carried for a distance. Then came the jar of the bag being thrown down, and after that we felt a steady jolting motion.

We had been put in a cart and were being driven away from the barn.

On and on we went for miles and miles, and then at last the jolting ceased, the sack was opened, and we were emptied out over the side of the cart into the road.

Then the cart drove on, the wheel almost passing over Whitey, and we were left there alone.

No house nor barn was in sight. As far back as we could see stretched the yellow and rutty road. In front there was still the road, but leading through a deep pine wood. We were in a part of the world utterly unknown and strange to us.

I have often wondered why, if the farmer wanted to be rid of us, he did not drown us at once. It would have been less cruel than to drop us in that way beside the road, where we ran the risk of starving, or of being torn to pieces by dogs, or pelted and tormented by cruel boys.

I have had a sad life. I have known great hardships, but nothing has ever seemed to me so heartlessly cruel as the dropping of us helpless kittens on that lonely road to live or die as might happen.

I have often wondered what became of my brothers and sisters, — whether they starved to death, or whether they found a home where the people were less hard of heart than that farmer; but I have never seen any of them since that day.

After we had recovered from the jar of being thrown from the cart, we took counsel together as to what we should do.

Mouser and Frisky said they were going to try to find their way back to the old barn.

Whiskers, a gaunt, fierce kitten, struck off across the fields by himself.

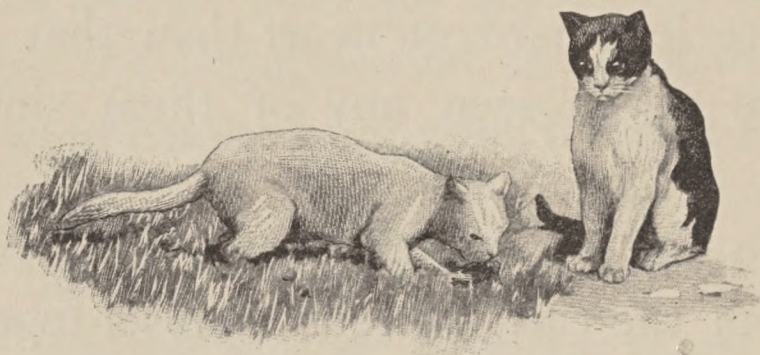
Whitey, who had always been fonder of me than of any of the others, said that she would go where I went.

I told her I intended to follow the cart, which had gone on and had now disappeared in the distance. There seemed no use in going back, since the farmer would not allow us to stay, but there

seemed to me more chance of finding a barn by following the road than by taking to the field.

This plan suited Whitey as well as any other, so bidding farewell to our brothers, we two started bravely on our way together.

Birds flitted from bush to bush beside the road, and in the pine woods I saw a squirrel running



Whitey eating the Mouse

like a red shadow along a branch overhead, but it was hopeless to think of catching any of these.

Whitey complained that she was hungry, and I myself was beginning to feel that it was long since I had had anything to eat. So bidding Whitey wait for me by the roadside, I crept stealthily past the fence and through the long grass of the field.

On I went, now crouching and listening, now stealing forward on velvet paws.

At last my hunt was rewarded. Before me,

busy over a bunch of tender grasses, was a plump field mouse.

A bound, a faint squeak, and a moment after I was hurrying back to Whitey with the mouse in my teeth.

Whitey purred with joy as I laid it before her, and immediately fell to, not stopping till the last morsel of the mouse had been eaten, while I sat looking on.

Not until she had quite finished did Whitey remember that I might be hungry, too.

“Oh dear!” she cried. “Here I have eaten it all, and now there is nothing left for you. How greedy I have been;” and the poor, tender little thing looked ready to mew.

I told her it was no matter. I *did* feel hungry but I did not tell her so. I would have liked to go back to the field to hunt for another mouse for myself, but it was now growing late, and I hoped that we were nearing some barn where we might find shelter as well as food.

Just as the sun was setting and all the sky was in a glow, we heard a horse trotting, and a light sound of wheels. We drew to the side of the road and crouched down among the grasses.

Presently we saw a horse and buggy. A man was driving, and two children were on the seat beside him, a boy and a girl.

When they were almost up to us, the boy cried, "Look at that rabbit."

"Where?" asked the little girl.

"Over there by the fence. Can't you see it?"

The boy was pointing at Whitey.

"I see it," said the man checking his horse.

"But it isn't a rabbit. I believe it's a kitten. Why, there are two of them. Don't you see that gray one beside the clump of grass?"

"Kittens!" cried the little girl. "Oh, papa, do you suppose they're wild kittens? Couldn't you catch them?"

"They couldn't be wild kittens," said her father. "I suppose some one must have dropped them here. There's no house within a mile or so."

"Oh, they're so cunning," cried the child. "Mayn't I have them? Please, papa. Oh, please get them for me."

The little boy, too, begged his father to try to catch us.

The man gave the reins to the boy to hold, and jumped from the buggy.

“Brother,” whispered Whitey, “he’s coming to catch us. What shall we do? Shall we run away?”

I looked sharply at the man. He had a good, kind face. “Stay where you are, Whitey,” I said, “and let him catch you. You’re a pretty, gentle, little thing. They will be sure to give you a good home if they take you.”

“But won’t you wait, too?” asked Whitey, for I had slunk further away beyond the fence.

“No, no; you are pretty and lovable, but who would want an ugly, lean thing like me? Besides there would be more chance of their keeping you if there were only one instead of two.”

So Whitey crouched quite still and allowed the man to touch her and pick her up. He carried her back to the buggy and gave her into the hands of the little girl.

I heard the child petting her and calling her pretty names. I heard her begging her father to allow her to keep the little “Snowball,” as she called Whitey, and her father said she might. Then I heard both children asking him to catch the other kitten too, but he refused. “No, no,” he said. “One is quite enough. What would

your mother say if we came home with a whole family of kittens? You'll be fortunate if she'll allow you to keep that one. Besides, the other is an ugly, dirty-looking thing."

Then he climbed into the buggy and they drove away, taking my little sister with them.

Now I was quite alone in the world. For a little while I lost heart. Why should I go on or struggle any more? Why not lie down there among the grasses and quietly wait for death to come?

But soon I shook off this sadness and made up my mind that the first thing to be done was to go into the fields and try to find something that I could eat, for I was growing faint with hunger.

It was at this time, while hunting about the fields, that I got caught in the rabbit trap and was lamed for life.

To take up my story from there ;—

After I had climbed down from the tree as best I could with my sore paw, I went across the fields and back to the road.

I caught one or two crickets and a grasshopper on the way, and these served to ease my hunger.

On I went, limping slowly, and just as the dusk

had settled down over the road I came to the outskirts of a town.

People were sitting in the lighted doorways talking together. Dogs barked, and a church bell rang. Everybody seemed happy, comfortable, and satisfied, except myself.

Seeing a dog coming down the street I took shelter in a corner against a closed door of a shop. Presently, worn out with hunger and weariness my eyes closed and I fell into a deep sleep.

I was wakened by the opening of the door, and at the same moment some one came out and stumbled over me.

“What’s that?” said a man’s voice.

He stooped and put his hands on me. I was too worn out to struggle or to try to escape. I felt I could bear anything rather than try to move at that moment.

As the man felt my fur he made some exclamation. “What is it, Ned?” asked a woman’s voice from the house.

“I think it’s a kitten,” he answered. “I almost fell over it.”

“A kitten! Bring it in and let’s see what it looks like.”

The man lifted me quite gently and carried me into a comfortable, well-lighted room. A plump, little woman was clearing away the dishes from a supper table.

She stopped with a meat plate in her hand, as the man set me down on the floor.

"Oh, what an ugly kitten!" she cried. "I want a cat, but I don't want one like that. Ugh, but it's dirty! And look at its paw! It makes me sick. Do take it out."

"It isn't a beauty," said the man. "Here's a good chance to count how many ribs a cat has."

"It does look perfectly starved," the woman said. "Wait; I'll give it something to eat, and then you can take it away."

She poured out a generous saucerful of milk and set it before me, and also gave me some scraps of meat. I felt too sick to touch the meat, but I drank all the milk and felt strengthened and refreshed.

"There now, take it away," said the woman; "and for goodness' sake, carry it far enough off for it not to come back here."

The man took me up again and carried me away through the night. At last he dropped me

in a half-empty ash barrel. There I settled down on the soft ashes and slept until morning.

Those were wretched days that followed. I learned how hard life can be for a homeless cat. I learned what it was to be chased and stoned by cruel boys ; to have dogs run after one, and to barely escape their teeth by slipping under an alley gate ; to be scorned and starved and driven from one place to another. Still, I managed to live. I would find a bit to eat here and there, in the street or in back yards.

Sometimes, as I hobbled along with my lame foot, I would see through open windows and doors other and happier cats than I,—sleek, well-fed Tabbies or Tommies. Sometimes children would be playing with them. I longed to have a home too, but who would give house room to a cat like me,—ugly, lean, dirty, and lame ?

After a while I came to be known in the alley where I lived. The people there called me Limpety. Sometimes they threw me a scrap of bread or a bone, but no one would take me in.

At last came winter, hardest of all. Everything was frozen. I do not like to think of that time even now.

One day, when I had not had a morsel to eat, a dog chased me out from behind an ash barrel where I was hiding. Some boys were coming along the street. When they saw me running, they gave a cruel shout and started after me.

I knew then that it was a race for life that I was running. On and on I went, the boys after me. I left the alley and, in my haste, turned corner



The Flight of Limpety

after corner, until I reached a part of the city where I had never been before. Here the houses were quite fine and large.

It was morning, and there were few people in the street. In front of one of the houses a nurse was pushing a child up and down in a wheeled chair.

It was in the corner of the steps leading up to this house that I took shelter and turned at last

to face my enemies. Worn out by hunger, I could go no further. I felt that the end was near.

“ Oh, nurse ! nurse ! ” screamed the little boy in the chair. “ Oh, they’re going to kill that cat ! Oh, don’t let them hurt it. It’s *lame* ! ”

It was the first word of mercy I had heard for months. The nurse left the chair and went over to the crowd of boys.

The child in the chair was wringing his hands and almost crying.

I do not know just what happened after that. I was dulled and hardly conscious. I think the nurse gave the boys some money. Then there was some talk that was ended by the nurse picking me up as though she were afraid to touch me. A man servant came out from the house and carried the little boy in, while the woman followed with me. How warm and beautiful and soft it was in the room where they carried us!

A lady rose to meet us as we came in. “ Oh what a hideous cat ! ” she exclaimed. “ Don’t bring that in here, nurse. ”

“ Oh yes, mamma ; it must come in, ” cried the child. “ Don’t you see ? It’s lame like me. ”

The lady paused for a moment looking at the

child with eyes that were very sad. Then she said very gently, "But, Arthur dear, it is such a dirty cat. We will keep it if you wish, but let it be taken down to the kitchen."

But no, the little boy would not have that either. He wanted me there in the room with him. He seemed to like me.

I suppose it was for the reason the child had spoken of—that we were both lame—that he loved me so, for he was lame, too, as I could see now.

And so I had a home at last and not only a home, but a master so kind and loving that I don't believe any cat ever had such a one before.

What games we used to have together! As a kitten I had never played much, except just at first in the barn with my brothers and sisters. After that I was too lonely, and wretched, and hungry. I don't think my little master had ever played much, either.

But now he and I would play together by the hour with a bit of paper and a string. How he would laugh, throwing his little head back on the cushion! Sometimes he laughed so hard that his mother would say, "Not too much, Arthur; not

too much. Stop your play for a while now, and I will read to you."

Then the paper and string would be put away. He would call me to him, and I would snuggle against him, soft and warm, and purr and purr.

He loved my purring. He would have me sleep on his bed at night and sometimes he would waken in the night and reaching down would pull me softly by the ears. "Come, wake up, dear Limpety," he would say. "I can't sleep. Purr, to me, purr."



Limpety and his Master

Then I would stretch myself, and purr and purr until the lids fell over the blue eyes and the soft breathing told me that he was asleep.

Sometimes he was sad. Then he would put his hand on my fur and smooth me softly. "Poor old Limpety. We're both lame, aren't we?" he would say. "Poor little cat."

But generally he was very happy.

I am growing old—very old—now ; little Arthur is still little Arthur and always will be. But we neither of us care so much for play as we used to. He loves me just as dearly as ever, though.

Often we will sit for hours at the open window, I purring gently, he with his book open before him, and his eyes fixed on the blue sky and the clouds above the houses opposite.

I wonder what he is thinking about.

I think a good deal myself. I think of the old days in the barn. I think of my mother and my gentle little sister, of the hard days after I left them, and that our new cook doesn't thicken the chicken gravy as well as the other one did, and then I flick my ear.

Oftenest I thank my lucky stars that I was a poor, lame, stray cat, since my very lameness brought me such a home and such a master as I have now.



THE OPOSSUM FAMILY

MOTHER OPOSSUM had chosen a curious place for her home. It was an old, unused barrel in the corner of a shipyard. There she lived very quietly for nobody knows how long, in spite of the noise and clangor all about.

She came out only at night, and then the shipyard was deserted. Everything lay as silent and lonely as in the deep forest. More silent, indeed, for in the woods there would have been the rustling of the leaves. Here there was nothing but the footsteps of the night watchmen sounding now and then through the stillness.

At first Mother 'Possum was very timid and watchful, but after awhile, as nothing happened to frighten her, she grew bolder. She would come out and wander off on quite long journeys in search of food. She was always careful, however, to be at home before the daylight came, or the workmen were back at their toil.

But one night I think that Mother 'Possum must have gone farther than ever before; or perhaps she was late in starting out. In any case, it was broad daylight when she reached the shipyard and hastened along among the timbers, still quite a distance from the barrel.

Patrick, one of the laborers, was driving a mule across the yard. The mule was walking along, half asleep, his head low, his ears wagging. After him, on the narrow track, rumbled a truck filled with iron castings. Suddenly the mule started and stopped, his ears pricking up. Directly in front of him, crossing the very track, was the strangest looking creature he had ever seen. It was as large as a cat, but it wasn't a cat. Its tail was like a rat's, but it wasn't a rat. It was altogether strange and unexpected.

In a moment Jim, the quietest of mules, had whirled round in the harness and was madly trying to climb on the truck and out of danger. At least that was what Patrick said.

By the time he had Jim quieted down and in place again, the opossum had disappeared.

"I'll find her, though, if she's anywhere about the place," said Patrick. And so he did, that very

evening, after a search of nearly an hour. He found her at home in the barrel in the neglected corner, and there with her were nine little opossums—her babies.

Tiny little things those babies were. So small that they could all get into the soft, warm pouch that Mother 'Possum has just under her stomach.



Little Opossums and their Mother

In this way she could carry them about with her where she chose, and feel sure that they were safe.

Patrick stared and wondered, while Mother 'Possum opened her mouth and threatened him if he should dare to touch her or her babies.

Then Patrick put a board over the barrel so that the opossum could not escape, and weighted it

down with rocks. "I'll jest keep you in there and maybe I can sell you," said Patrick.

Sure enough the next day he found a darky who would be glad to buy the opossum from him. The darky was so pleased at the thought of the feast which the 'possum would make, served up at dinner with roasted sweet potatoes and onions, that he grinned like an ogre.

While Patrick and he were still bargaining, one of the young clerks in the office happened to overhear them. "An opossum and young ones!" he cried, "Why, I'll buy them, Pat. I've always wanted to see if opossums are really untamable. The natural histories say they are."

So Mother 'Possum was saved from the pot or oven, for that time, at least. Instead, she and her babies were taken to the young clerk's room and made at home in a fine, big cage.

But it seemed for a while as though Mother 'Possum meant to starve herself to death. She would not eat anything. Milk, raw eggs, raw meat, and chicken were offered to her, but she would not touch them.

One morning her master had nothing for her but condensed milk that he had for his coffee.

More as a joke than anything else, he offered her some of this and found that she ate it greedily.

The next thing she condescended to eat was a piece of rhubarb pie ; then some hard-boiled eggs. These things seemed to complete the list of what she would eat, until her owner shot a sparrow and put it in her cage, and she finished it,—feathers, bones, beak and all.

After this she was fed almost entirely on sparrows, and soon she began to get fat again, for she had grown very thin after she was first shut in her cage.

But, though Mother 'Possum grew fat and hearty, her owner could never tame her. Even the little ones were always as wild as when they had first been lifted from the barrel, and whenever any one came near, they would open their mouths threateningly.

They were too little and young, really, to be able to bite, and the young man often took them out and handled them, though they never grew used to this. He would amuse himself by stretching a piece of rope across the room and hanging all nine of the little 'possums along it in a row by their tails. He would twist their little tails about

the rope and leave them there, head downwards, and there they would swing.

When they were first hung up they would try to climb up their own tails and get hold of the rope. Sometimes they succeeded in doing this, and sometimes they didn't. If they didn't, they would soon give up struggling, and instead would begin clasping and unclasping their little forefeet despairingly. All their feet were shaped curiously like hands.

They were stupid little things, not at all like racoons, which are as intelligent and mischievous as monkeys, and their owner soon found they were not of much value as pets. However, after having fed them and kept them in his room for some weeks he could not bear the thought of turning them loose where they would be likely to be killed and eaten. Besides, it did not seem right to set them free near any houses, for opossums are fond of eating chickens and eggs, and he feared the neighboring poultry might suffer.

So one day the young clerk hired a horse and wagon, fastened Mother 'Possum and her family in a good stout bag, and drove away with them.

He drove for miles and miles, far down a swampy neck of land where no one lived. There

in the depth of a wood, he stopped the horse, lifted out the bag, untied the fastening, and gently shook Mother 'Possum and her brood out upon the ground.

For a little while they stood as though dazed by their long ride, or perhaps not believing freedom was really offered to them; but, at last, first one and then another crept away through the underbrush, going faster and faster as they felt themselves getting out of reach.

When the last one had disappeared, the young man got into the wagon, and drove slowly back the way he had come,—back to his room, where the empty cage awaited him, and the rope that would never again be clasped by the little 'possums' tails as they swung there in a row.

POLLY

PAULINA was a parrot. Paulina was her name, but she was always called Polly.

Paulina's mistress had had a great many parrots, but they had all died. Then Polly was sent to her.

Polly was a beautiful bird. She was of a soft, gray color, all except her tail; that was red—a

red so brilliant that it seemed to burn in the sun like a bunch of geraniums.

"The bird is beautiful," said the lady, "but what a pity to send it to me. My parrots all die."

"If you want it to live," said a friend, "don't give it any water."

"Not give it any water!" said the lady. "I never heard of such a thing."

"All your parrots die. That's because you give them water. If you want this one to live, don't give it any."

Polly's mistress followed this advice. The parrot did not seem to suffer for want of water. From year's end to year's end it did not have any, and it lived and thrived.

The mistress bathed the parrot herself. She put it in the bathtub, and rubbed it with soap and water. This always made the parrot furious. It would shriek with rage. She had to be very careful then to hold it so it could not bite her.

Except when it was being bathed, the parrot was very fond of its mistress.

It would call to her at the top of its voice when she was out of the room. When she came in, the parrot would talk to her with soft little throat notes, put-

ting its head down against the bars of the cage and ruffling up its feathers. It wanted her to scratch its head.

Polly was very jealous of a canary whose cage hung in the same room.

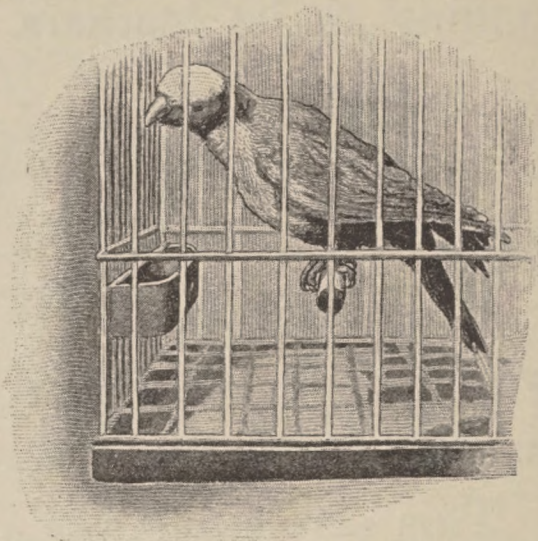
If the mistress spoke to the canary, the parrot would shake the bars of the cage, biting them with its hard beak and screaming.

This screaming was very harsh and unpleasant. To break Polly of this habit, the mistress would cover the cage with a black cloth whenever it began.

Then from under cover, the parrot could be heard talking to itself. "Poor Polly. Want to go to bed, Polly? Want to go to bed? Poor Polly, want to go bed?" Then, with sudden energy, "*No, no, NO! Poor Polly!*"

Bobby, the canary, was a fine singer. As long as no one was in the room, Polly would sit listening to the song very quietly. The mistress could see the parrot through the crack of the door, sitting silently on its perch. It would turn its head first on one side and then on the other, and click its beak approvingly. The moment any one came in, however, Polly would try to drown out the canary's song by talking or screaming.

One day a very sad thing happened. A cat got into the room where the cages of the two birds hung. When the mistress came in to feed them, nothing was left of poor Bobby but two or three yellow feathers scattered about. The wires of the cage were bent apart where the cat had reached through. It had eaten Bobby.



Polly

The parrot was sitting very quietly and thoughtfully on its perch. As its mistress came in, Polly said in a hoarse voice, "Poor Bobby! Poor Bobby! Bobby want his head scratched?"



Gyp

After Bobby was gone, Polly did not scream so much.

There was a little dog named Gyp that lived in the house.

Polly learned to imitate the whistle that called Gyp to go for a walk. A dozen times a day Polly would whistle for him, and

a dozen times a day Gyp would start up and come rushing in all ready for a walk.

The moment he came in Polly would be perfectly silent. Gyp would look all around the room and then run out into the hall.

As soon as he had gone, Polly would whistle again. Back would come the little dog, trembling with eagerness.

Then Polly would whistle again, going into peals of harsh laughter. Gyp, finding he had been fooled, would leap up at the cage, barking and snapping his teeth with helpless rage, but he never seemed to learn any better. The next time the parrot called, he would come running in just as before.

The parrot was very accomplished. At one time it had belonged to a concert singer. It could sing "Coming through the Rye," "Alice Ben Bolt," and three other songs. Beside these it sang a negro hymn that began :

"Nobody knows de trouble I see, Lord ;
Nobody knows de trouble I see."

They said that at one time an old negro woman had had charge of Polly. The parrot used to sit on

the back of her chair while she rocked and sang this hymn over and over.

The parrot would only sing this in one way. It had to be shut up in a shawl or towel, or something of the kind, and swung about. For a while it would be perfectly quiet. Then, as it swung, it would begin to sing this hymn. It would sing it as long as the swinging continued.

Polly sang and talked so well that a friend of her mistress asked if she might not send her parrot over to visit Polly for a while. She hoped that this other parrot, whose name was Punch, might learn something from Polly.

For a while after Punch came, Polly was perfectly silent. She was observing him.

Punch knew two sentences. He could say, "Punch wants a cracker," and "Scratch Punch's head." He also knew part of a song called "Pretty Polly Hopkins."

He sang this song in a very curious way. He would sing a few notes and then skip to quite another part of the song like this :

"Pretty, pretty Polly Hop—
do, how d'ye—

—the better Tom—Tompkins
—seeing of you.”

Polly listened to this attentively.

At last one day when Punch was singing it, she burst into a peal of laughter. Punch stopped as if abashed. Then

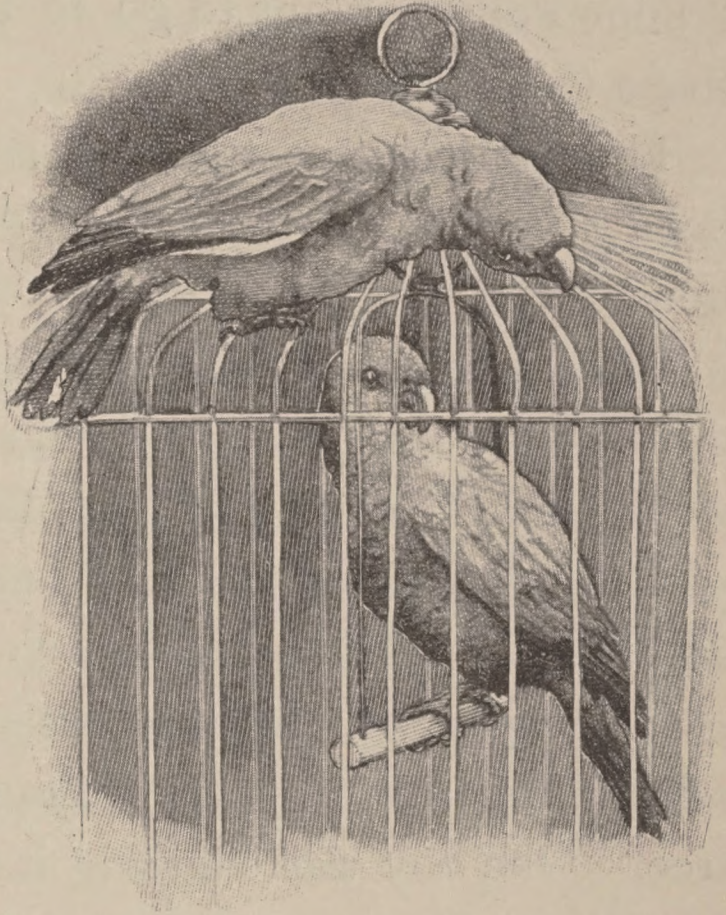
Polly spoke for the first time since Punch had come.

“Sing, Punch, sing,” she said.
“Poor Punch, sing.”

After a while Punch began to sing again. Then Polly burst into peal after peal of harsh laughter.

It was very amusing to watch the two parrots. Again and again Polly would ask Punch to sing. Then, as soon as he did so, she would begin to laugh, and Punch would stop singing and look sulky.

One lovely spring afternoon, the parrots’ cages



“Sing, Punch, Sing”

were put out in the trees, that they might enjoy the soft air and the sunlight. Polly's mistress went for a drive and the parrots were forgotten.

In the chill of the late afternoon, as the mistress came home, she heard a doleful voice from above. "Poor Polly. Want to go to bed, Polly? Want to go to bed?"

The parrots were taken in, and they must have been glad to get back into the warmth of the house.

After Punch was sent back to his home Polly drooped for a while. She seemed to miss him. She would call, "Punch! Punch! Punch!" at the top of her voice and then turn her head to one side and listen.

One day as her mistress was coming home from a walk, she saw a group of boys and men about a tree. One boy was climbing it.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"It's a parrot, ma'am," said one of the men. "I don't know where it came from."

At that moment a familiar, hoarse voice in the tree called, "Punch! Punch! Poor Polly!"

"Why that's my parrot," cried the lady.

She went nearer and looked up into the tree.

She saw a glint of scarlet among the leaves. "Polly, Polly!" she called. "Come, Polly."

The parrot only flapped its wings as if to fly.

"I'll give a dollar to any one who'll get that parrot for me," said the lady.

One of the boys crawled slowly out on the limb where the parrot sat. He put out his hand. "Poor Polly!" said the parrot, and away it flew. The boys tried to follow it, but they lost sight of it after a while.

The mistress never knew how Polly had escaped, —whether some one had left the cage door unfastened, or whether the parrot had learned to unhook it for itself. But she never saw her pet again, though she advertised and offered a reward. She never had another parrot. She said she was too unlucky with them.

THE PET LAMB

A BLIZZARD had been raging all night long. The air was white with flakes of snow; the wind howled across the fields; in some places it heaped

the snow higher than a man's head ; in other places it swept the ground almost bare.

One of the places where the ground was almost clear was over at the sheepcote, a sort of loosely-built shed, where the sheep could take shelter in cold or stormy weather.

There they were huddled now. Their thick wool kept them warm ; but with them were a number of little, new born lambs, so small and tender that they would die in the cold unless some help came to them soon. One of them seemed dead already.

"Baa-a-a !" cried the mother sheep, but the lamb did not stir, nor try to rise from the ground where it lay.

Help was near, however. Very soon after daylight, two men came to the sheepcote. One was Mr. Brown, who owned the farm where the sheepcote was ; the other was a farm servant.

"Only just in time, William," said Mr. Brown. "Some of these would have been dead in a little while."

They put the lambs in two great sacks which they had with them, and carried them away. The mother sheep bleated after them.

The helpless lambs were carried across the

fields, through a garden, now bleak and snowy, and into the large, warm kitchen of the farmhouse.

There Nelly, Mr. Brown's daughter, was ready for them. She had some milk warming on the stove. The lambs were taken from the sack. They were too chilled and weak to stand. Nelly mixed some whiskey with the warm milk, and then she and her father poured it down the lambs' throats by spoonfuls. Those that seemed weakest were attended to first.

Soon all the lambs began to revive; even the very little one that had seemed dead, though they had to work a long time over it.



The Pet Lamb

The weather was so bitterly cold that Mr. Brown was afraid the lambs would die if they were taken out again, even as far as the barn, so for several days they were kept in the kitchen. A bed of hay was made for them in one corner, and fenced about with chairs, so that they could not

get out. Several times a day they were fed with a gruel made of corn meal, water and milk.

At the end of four or five days the weather was so much milder that the lambs were taken back to their mothers. Only one was still kept at the farmhouse,—the little one that had almost died. It was so puny and weak that Nelly said she was going to keep it, and try to bring it up by hand.

She was so successful that Tiny, as she named the lamb, lived and throve. Soon he was the pet of the whole family. He trotted upstairs and downstairs, wherever he chose to go, and even into the cellar.

In the cellar the old mother cat had a family of kittens. There was nothing the lamb liked better than to get into the box with those kittens. There he would snuggle up to the mother cat, and lie quietly for an hour at a time.

After a while when Tiny was turned out of doors, he made friends with the two dogs, Jock and Dandy.

Jock was Tiny's particular playmate. They had regular games together. The lamb would leap from the ground, and then butt at Jock. Jock would pretend to be very much frightened, and

run around the house with Tiny in pursuit. Then suddenly, he would turn with a bark and chase the lamb, which would run in its turn.

Sometimes pigs got into the yard, and the dogs were sent to drive them out. Tiny ran with them, just as though he were a dog, too. He could not bark, but he put down his head and butted at the pigs, scaring them almost as much as the dogs did.

When Tiny grew to be a big sheep he was sent down to the pasture with the rest of the flock; but he had lived at the house with people and dogs for so long that he would have nothing to do with sheep; he did not even know his mother, nor did she know him. He kept quite away from the others, over in a corner by himself, and baa-ed plaintively.

When Nelly came down to the sheep pasture to see how he was getting on, he rushed to her. He nuzzled his nose in her hand, and was so delighted to see her that she took down the bars and let him come out.

He followed her home very quietly, keeping so close to her that her skirts brushed against him all the way.

Before Tiny had been sent to the sheep pas-

ture he had been a greedy and impatient sheep, but after he came home again he was very quiet and well behaved. He no longer acted like a spoiled child. He did not beg and fret at the kitchen door for milk, but grazed about the lawn very quietly and humbly. It seemed as though he



The Pet Lamb

meant to show how good and grateful he would be if only he were allowed to stay where people were, instead of being sent down among all those strange and unknown sheep.

Tiny was gentle and familiar with all the family, but the only one he seemed really to love was Nelly.

He used to wait at the door for her in the morning, and then follow her about like a dog. He enjoyed going for a walk with her more than anything else, particularly if the dogs went too. He would not go for a walk with any other mem-

bers of the family. He would follow them to the gate, but not a step further. There he would stand, looking wistfully after them as they went down the road, the dogs barking and leaping about. Then he would go back to the house, push open a door, and go upstairs and downstairs until he found Nelly. Once sure that she was in the house, he was content to graze about the lawn by himself.

But as Tiny grew older he began to show a very bad temper. First, he grew cross toward strangers; then he chased the dogs if they came near him. At last, even the children grew afraid of him; that was after one of them had tried to pat his head, and he had butted her over. With Nelly only was he still gentle and affectionate.

"He's getting to be a perfect nuisance," said Mr. Brown. "We'll have to keep him down at the pasture with the others."

"Oh, but he's so unhappy there," pleaded Nelly. "Please don't send him away. He wouldn't be cross if the children would keep away from him."

So Tiny was allowed to stay near the house a little longer.

Then Nelly went away for a visit. When she

came home she was so busy at first, telling of all she had seen and hearing the home news, that she did not think of Tiny. When she remembered him, she went to the door and looked about.

“Where’s Tiny?” she asked.

Then her father told her that after she had left, the old sheep had grown so very cross that they could not stand him any longer. He had been sent away with some other sheep, and she would not see him again.

“Poor, poor, old Tiny!” said Nelly, but in her heart she was not very sorry.

WHAT BECAME OF THE KITTENS

BLACKIE was a very uncommon cat. She was so intelligent that sometimes it seemed as though she must understand what was said to her.

She could climb like a squirrel. One day Alice saw her in the very top of the Lombardy poplar, the highest tree on the place. There she was, swinging about in the wind like a black spot among the leaves.

Blackie was a fine mouser. She was also an

enemy to all strange dogs. She would not allow one in the yard if she were there. She would fly at him and drive him out, whatever his size. If she happened to be looking out of the window and saw a strange dog outside, she would arch her back and spit, and it almost seemed as though she would jump through the glass to get at him.

She once jumped through a window pane to get at a bird that had lighted on the sill outside, but she was so cut by the glass that it taught her a lesson.

Blackie never liked to be stroked or petted as most cats do. Sometimes when she was very sleepy she would allow herself to be smoothed for a few moments, and then suddenly she would give a growl, her yellow eyes would open wide and she would leap to her feet and spring away out of reach.

When she had kittens she was gentler. She was always a very good mother and very proud of her young ones.

One time she had four kittens, all just alike and all black like herself, with scarcely a white hair on them. She had made a nest in the garret back of an old trunk, and there she hid them. They were several days old before any one found them, so cleverly had Blackie tucked them away.

"We can't keep them all," said Mrs. Robbins. "The cook will take one and Maria another, but two of them will have to be drowned."

Charley was the one who was to do the drowning. His father promised to give him fifty cents when it was done. The boy waited until Blackie had left the kittens alone one day, and then he went up to the garret and carried two of them away. He took them back of the woodshed.

"Charley, did you get rid of those kittens to-day?" his father asked that evening.

"Yes, sir. I drowned them this morning."

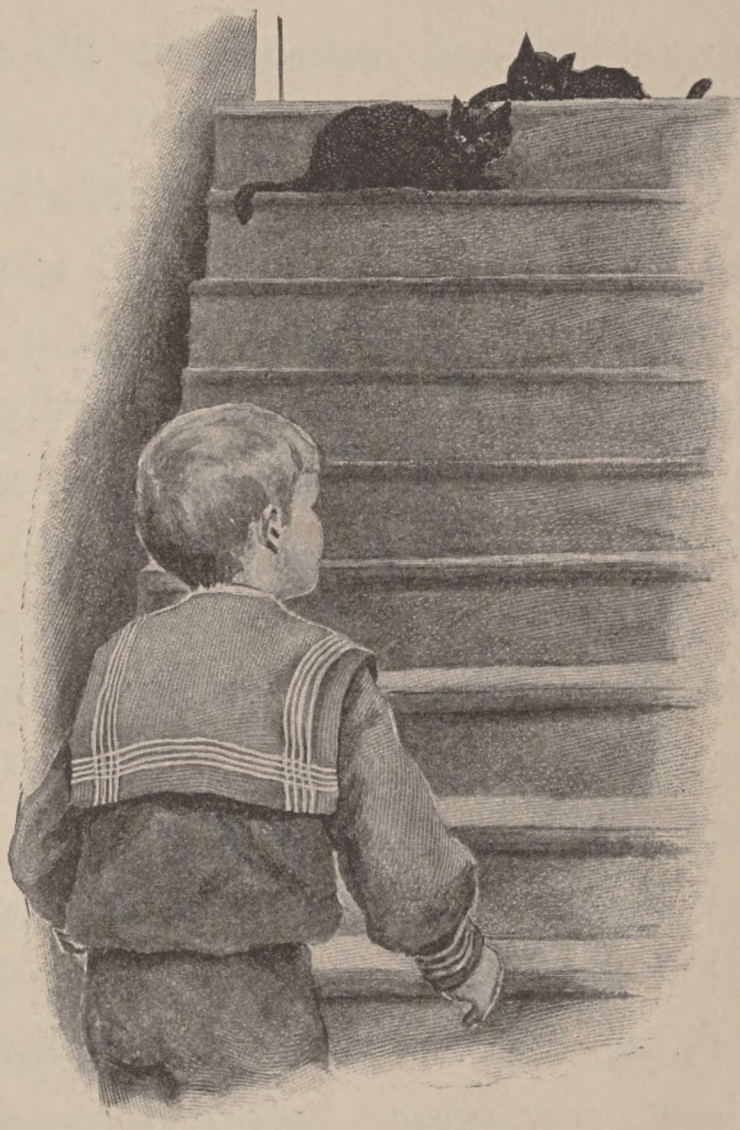
From that very day Blackie seemed to hate Charley. She would not let him come near her. Once he was going to the garret for something, but she met him on the steps. Her tailed swelled. She glared and spit and growled, so that he was actually afraid she would fly at him.

Charley could not understand it. He had not done anything to her, and she had always seemed to like him before. The only thing he could think of was that she might have seen him drowning her kittens, and hated him on that account; but that was hard to believe.

The two kittens that were left grew and throve,

and after a while they were large enough to come downstairs. Blackie was very proud of the notice they received from the family, and would sit waving her tail softly, and blinking with content, while Alice played with them or petted them.

One day when Blackie and her kittens were in the library, Charley went past the garret steps. Some sound made him look up. There, to his amazement, were two strange black kittens playing at the head of the stairs.



Charley and the Kittens

When they saw him they stopped playing, and silently vanished, like shadows, through the attic door.

Charley went upstairs and looked about. No living thing was to be seen. He moved the trunks about, and presently from behind one of them the two kittens darted out and ran to another hiding place. They were just about as big as the kittens downstairs, and looked just like them, only they were very wild.

Charley ran downstairs and told his mother, and she and Alice came up and looked. When the boy scared the kittens out from where they were hiding, Mrs. Robbins could hardly believe her eyes.

They never did find out the secret of how those two kittens got there. The only explanation they could think of was that the kittens Charley had tried to drown had been saved in some way, and that Blackie must have found them and carried them up to her nest again.

When Alice took some milk up to them, Blackie followed her and they seemed to know the old cat.

After that Alice fed the kittens every day. They grew tamer before long, and after awhile good homes were found for all of them, but Charley said he would never again try to kill any of Blackie's kittens.

GRAYWINGS

“QUANK! Quank!” cried a wild goose. It was a cry of alarm.

A whole flock of wild geese were feeding in among the marshes. Five of the flock were acting as sentries. It was their duty to watch for danger while the rest of the flock fed. It was one of these sentries that had given the cry of warning.

At the sound, the flock rose from among the reeds with a great flapping and beating of wings, but the cry had come too late. As they rose in their flight there were loud reports from two guns. Bang—bang! and bang—bang!

Three geese fell from the flock. They had been shot.

Two were dead. They fell as heavy as stones, turning over and over as they came down. The other fell flapping and struggling. It was only wounded. It was still alive when the hunters found it, later on, among the reeds. One wing trailed at its side, useless and blood-stained. The bone had been broken.

The hunters did not kill it. One of them said

he would take it home alive and give it to his boy and girl as a pet.

The boy and girl were very much interested in the wild goose, when the man took it to them, though the little girl almost cried to see its broken wing. However, her father told her that he would



Graywings wounded

set the bone and bandage the wing and that it would be well before long. He told her that if the bones of wild fowls are broken they heal of themselves if the fowls are in free-

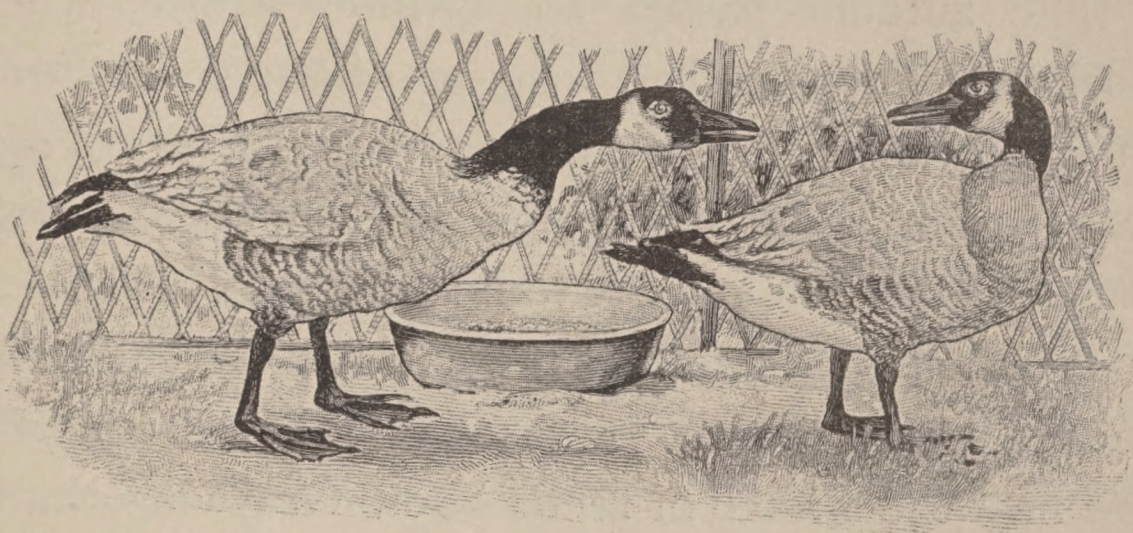
dom, but if they are caged, the bones have to be set.

The children named their goose Graywings, and a fine large cage was built for it.

The goose seemed sad and lonely. It pined in its cage and would hardly ever eat. Perhaps it was pining for its mate.

One day the father of the children came home very much pleased. He said he had bought a present for them. He had not brought it with him, and he would not tell them what it was.

That afternoon the present came home in a wooden box with slats across the front. It was a wild goose which he had bought from a man who



Graywings and the Stranger.

had trapped it. The children's father said he had bought it as a mate for Graywings.

The little boy and girl were delighted. They thought how happy Graywings would be to have a companion. They could hardly wait to take it out and put it in the cage with her.

But what a disappointment! Graywings did not seem to like the stranger at all. If it came near her, she threatened it with her open beak. She

would not let it eat with her, and she drove it into a corner, where it stood terrified and unhappy, almost afraid to move.

They left the new goose there for several days, but Graywings would not make friends with it. Then it seemed so very unhappy that they took it out and sent it back to where it had come from.

The autumn passed and winter came. The flocks of wild geese had long ago flown southward in long V's, quacking as they went. Everything was frozen as hard as stone. Even the crows could hardly find enough to keep themselves alive.

It was at this time that the uncle of the children caught a wild goose. It was hiding in a little hollow near the stretch of reeds where Graywings had been shot. The goose was very thin and weak, for it was almost starved.

The uncle brought it to the house where the children lived. He and their father wondered very much how the goose came to be left behind when all its companions flew south. It was not injured in any way, and it must have been a fine, strong goose before it became nearly starved.

They warmed the goose and gave it food and water. When the goose seemed somewhat re-

vived, the uncle said : " Suppose we keep it out in the cage with that other wild goose you have."

" Oh, no," said the little girl, " Graywings will peck it, and this poor goose is so weak and starved."

" Well, let's try it, and see what she'll do," said the uncle. So the goose was taken out and put in the cage with Graywings.

What was the surprise of the boy and girl to see Graywings come up to the poor, weak stranger, and greet it with the greatest joy. The new goose seemed glad to see Graywings, too.

Then the children's father guessed how it must be. The starving goose must have been Graywings' mate. After she was shot her mate must have left the flock, letting it fly on southward without him, while he lingered near the place where she had fallen.

If the uncle had not found the goose, it would soon have starved to death.

All winter the two geese lived very happily together in the cage. Then when spring came, and they grew restless and beat their wings as though they longed to fly, the father said it was a shame to keep them imprisoned there any longer. .

So one beautiful day, when the wind blew from

the south, and the maple trees were green with winged seeds, the children rather sadly opened the door of the cage and set the wild geese free.

And that was the best ending to the story, the father said.

THE FLYING SQUIRREL

ONE of the branches of Mr. Whiting's great poplar tree had died, and Mr. Whiting told Tim, the hired man, to saw it off.

Billy Whiting and his cousin Joe followed Tim out on the lawn and watched him climb the tree, settle himself among the branches, and begin to saw.

Billy and Joe were about the same age, but Billy was the taller by almost half a head. He was rather a fat boy, and something of a bully. Ever since his cousin Joe had come to visit him, he had been teasing and daring him. "Ho," he would say, "you can't do what *I* do"; or, "You'd be afraid, but *I'm* not"; or, "you daren't do it, but *I* can."

Now as they stood watching Tim up in the tree, sawing away, Billy began boasting again: "You

ought to see me climb. You couldn't climb up there and saw that limb, could you?"

"I don't know," said Joe doubtfully.

"'Course you couldn't; I could though. Yes, sir, I'd just climb up there as easy as anything and saw that limb off. I wouldn't be afraid."

Suddenly from the shaking branch a flying squirrel came sailing down directly at Billy. It must have been too badly frightened to know where it was going.

When Billy saw the thing skimming down at him, he was so terrified that he spread his arms out and fell flat on his back on the ground, howling.

The flying squirrel scarcely touched him and was gone in a moment, but the boy still lay there, crying so loudly that his mother came out on the piazza.

"What's the matter, Billy?" she asked.

Tim up in the tree had seen it all, and he laughed so hard that he had to stop sawing.

When Joe told his aunt what had happened, she looked provoked, and called to her son to get up and be quiet. Billy stopped crying and got up, looking rather silly, and for the rest of the day he was less boastful.

By the time Tim had sawed the branch through, it was beginning to rain and the boys had to go into the house. All that afternoon the rain fell, but when, toward evening the weather cleared, Billy and Joe took off their shoes and stockings and ran out of doors. How wet and cool the grass was!



Joe and the Flying Squirrel

Joe was standing under the poplar tree when he felt something soft crawling over his bare foot. He looked down and there was a little baby flying squirrel. There must have been a nest up in the tree, and

this little squirrel had probably fallen out of it.

The boy stooped and picked it up. It was too small and chilled to try to get away. He covered it up in his hands with a cry of delight and ran toward the house.

“What have you got? What have you got?” cried Billy running after him.

"It's a flying squirrel; a young flying squirrel," Joe answered, almost crying with excitement.

He ran to his aunt, followed by Billy. "Aunt Lucy, look! look! It's a young squirrel; oh, may I keep it? I found it on the lawn."

Aunt Lucy peeped into the hollow of his hands. "Why, so it is," she said: "a little squirrel."

She was almost as much interested as the boys. She said that of course Joe might keep it, and she would get a box for him to put it in.

Billy complained, and said that he ought to have the squirrel—it was on his father's lawn and came out of his father's tree; but his mother said she was surprised at him—that of course it belonged to Joe, since he had found it.

She got a box for Joe and gave him something soft to put in it, so that the little squirrel might have a comfortable nest. She also gave him some wire netting to put over the top of the box, that the little animal might not get away.

Joe fed it and then put it in the box, and he and Billy watched it and played with it until supper time.

While they went to supper, the box was left on a bench on the porch. They could see it through the open door as they sat at the table.

Suddenly Mrs. Whiting said softly, "Look, boys, there's the mother squirrel."

There she was, sure enough, on top of the wire netting. She had come in search of her little one.

"Let's try to catch her," said Billy. He stole very softly toward the porch. The mother squirrel waited until he reached the door, and then she was gone like a flash, and she did not come back.

When Joe went home a few days later he took his squirrel with him. It had become perfectly tame. His mother thought it was one of the prettiest little pets she had ever seen.

As it grew older, Joe carried it about with him in his pocket or in the breast of his blouse. It liked the blouse best. It would curl up and sleep there, warm and snug. Then when it awoke it would run up and peep out over his collar, with its tiny pretty head and beady eyes. How soft and furry it felt against Joe's neck!

One time he took it to school with him and when it climbed down his sleeve, it tickled so that, before he knew, he laughed out loud.

"Joseph, was that you?" asked the teacher.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Joe, very much fright-

ened, and, hastily slipping the squirrel into his pocket, he put his hand over it so that it could not get out.

"Come here, Joseph," said the teacher. Then, as he mounted the platform, she asked, "What have you in your pocket?"

Joe was afraid to tell her. He only looked at her in silence.

The teacher put her hand in his pocket. When she felt something warm and furry and alive, she gave a little cry. Then the squirrel peeped out.

"Joseph, you horrid boy, what *have* you in your pocket?" the teacher cried, rising from her chair.

"It's my flying squirrel."

All the scholars began to laugh, and the teacher could not help smiling a little herself, but Joe looked ready to cry.

"You shouldn't have brought it," she said. "School is no place for pets. You'll have to shut it up in your desk now until you go home, and *never* bring it here again."

Joe was glad to get off so easily. He shut Dicky (that was the squirrel's name) inside his desk and began to study, but the little animal was not content to be left there in the hard, cold desk alone ;

it rattled about among the things, and began to gnaw the wood. At last the teacher had to tell Joe to take the squirrel home and then come back for his lessons.

Flying squirrels cannot really fly. Between their front and hind legs, on either side, there is a skin or membrane that spreads out in such a way as to make them very broad and light. When they spread their feet and leap, they seem to soar, and can go for a long distance, but it is really only a leap and must always be from a higher to a lower place.

Dicky had a pretty little cage for a home, but he very seldom cared to stay in it. He liked better to roam about the house. He would run up the curtains, or get on top of the pictures and bookcases. From these places he would come flying down, often startling people by lighting on their heads or shoulders.

One time Joe's grandfather came to pay them a visit. He was an old man, and his head was very bald.

Once when grandfather was sitting quietly reading the evening paper, Dicky came soaring down from the top of the library door. He had

meant to light on grandfather's head, but when he touched it, it was so smooth and shiny that Dicky found nothing to cling to. Away he slid over the old gentleman's head and down his forehead, knocking off his eyeglasses as he went.

"Well, well!" cried grandfather.

Joe was in the room, and he could not help laughing until the tears stood in his eyes.



His grandfather tried to look angry, but he could not keep serious any better than Joe, and so they both laughed and laughed together.



It seemed after this as though

Dicky could not keep away from grandfather's head. Again and again he would come soaring down to it from some high place, but he always slipped off.

Grandpa and the Flying Squirrel

"Really I'll have to keep a handkerchief over

my head," said the old gentleman. But Joe's mother said the squirrel must be shut in its cage. It was getting to be too troublesome.

So Dicky was kept a prisoner until grandfather went away. After that he was allowed to run free again.

Joe used to bring nuts home to the squirrel and hide them about the room. He liked to see Dicky hunt them out. As soon as the squirrel found one, he would race away with it to some high place. Then he would sit up and eat it, holding it daintily in his fore paws as though they were little hands.

One of Dicky's great amusements was getting into the empty water pitcher in the guest chamber and racing round and round in it after his tail. Round and round and round he would go. Then he would stop to listen, and with a bound would be at the top of the pitcher, holding himself up by curling his little paws over the edge so that he could look out. If everything was quiet, he would drop back into the pitcher and begin chasing his tail again.

This habit of playing in the pitcher was almost the cause of Dicky's death.

One day Joe's mother had come to the guest

chamber for something, and she thought she heard an odd little noise from the washstand. She went over and looked in the pitcher. The maid had partly filled it with water that morning and there, still swimming desperately, but almost exhausted, was the poor little squirrel. She was just in time to save him. He must have come for his usual play, and jumped into the pitcher without looking to see whether it was empty or not.

Dicky's life, though a happy one, was not very long. Perhaps he had too many nuts. Perhaps it is not healthy for squirrels to be petted so much or to sleep in little boy's pockets.

One day Dicky seemed very subdued ; he would not eat, and he spent his time lying stretched out flat on top of the library bookcase, out of reach.

The next morning he was still lying there. Joe called him, but he did not stir, and when the boy climbed up and touched him, he found the little thing quite stiff and cold. Dicky's short life was ended.

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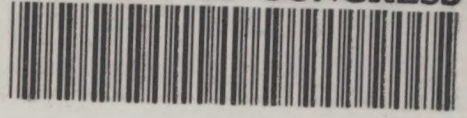
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